WOLFVILLE DAYS

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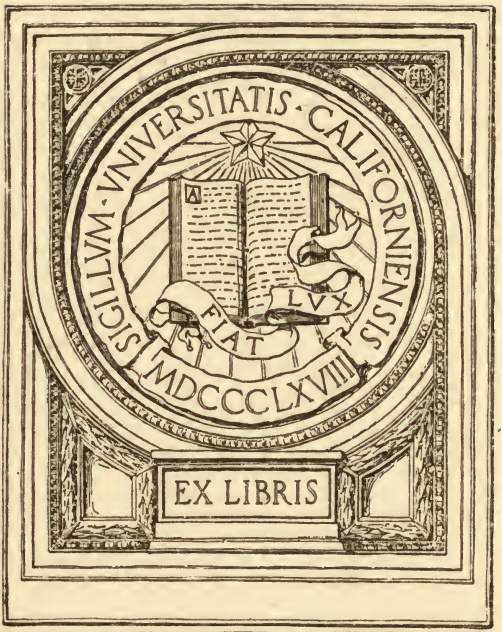
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WOLFVILLE DAYS

"HANDS UP!"

WOLFVILLE DAYS

By ALFRED HENRY LEWIS
Author of "Wolfville," "Sandburrs," "Pearls and Swine," etc.

With frontispiece by Frederic Remington

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CHAPTER I.

The Great Wolfville Strike.

"No, sir, even onder spur an' quirt, my mem'ry can only canter back to one uprisin' of labor in Wolfville; that was printers."

At this the Old Cattleman looked unduly sagacious, refreshed himself with a puff or two at his pipe, and all with the air of one who might, did he see fit, consider the grave questions of capital and labor with an ability equal to their solution. His remark was growth of the strike story of some mill workmen, told glaringly in the newspaper he held in his hands.

"Wolfville is not at that time," he continued, "what you-all East would call a swirlin' vortex of trade; still she has her marts. Thar's the copper mines, the Bird Cage Op'ry House, the Red Light, the O. K. Restauraw, the Dance Hall, the New York Store an' sim'lar hives of commerce. Which ondoubted the barkeeps is the hardest worked folks in camp, an' yet none of 'em ever goes on the warpath for shorter hours or longer pay, so far as I has notice. Barkeeps that a-way is a light-hearted band an' cheerful onder their burdens. Once when Old

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Monte brings the stage in late because of some boggin' down he does over at a quicksand ford in the foothills, a shorthorn who arrives with him as a passenger comes edgin' into the Red Light. Bein' it's four o'clock in the mornin', the tenderfoot seems amazed at sech activities as faro-bank, an' high-ball, said devices bein' in full career; to say nothin' of the Dance Hall, which 'Temple of Mirth,' as Hamilton who is proprietor rharof names it, is whoopin' it up across the street.

"'Ain't you open rather late?' says the shorthorn. His tones is apol'getic an' no offence is took.

"That's one of them gratefyin' things about the Southwest. That temperate region don't go pirootin' 'round strivin' to run its brand onto things as insults where none ain't meant. The Southwest ropes only at the intention. You may even go so far as to shoot the wrong gent in a darkened way, an' as long as you pulls off the play in a sperit of honesty, an' the party plugged don't happen to be a pop'lar idol, about the worst you'd get would be a caution from the Stranglers to be more acc'rate in your feuds, sech is the fairmindedness an' toleration of Southwest sentiment.

"As I su'gests, the barkeep, realizin' that the stranger's bluff arises from cur'osity rather than any notion of what booksports calls 'captious criticism,' feels no ombrage.

"'What was you-all pleased to remark?' retorts the barkeep as he slams his nose-paint where the shorthorn can get action.

"'Nothin',' replies the shorthorn, imbibin' of his forty drops, 'only it sort o' looks to my onaccustomed eye like this deadfall is open rather late.'

"'Which she is some late,' admits the barkeep, as he softly swabs the counter; 'which it is some late for night before last, but it's jest the shank of the evenin' for to-night.'

"But, as I observes a bit back on the trail, I never do hear of any murmur of resentment on the part of the toilin' masses of the town, save in the one instance when that bunch of locoed printers capers out an' defies the editor an' publisher of the Wolfville *Coyote*, the same bein' the daily paper of the outfit.

"This yere imprint, the *Coyote*, is done owned an' run by Colonel William Greene Sterett. An' I'll pause right yere for the double purpose of takin' a drink an' sympathisin' with you a whole lot in not knowin' the Colonel. You nacherally ain't as acootely aware of the fact as I be, but you can gamble a bloo stack that not knowin' Colonel Sterett borders on a deeprivation. He is shore wise, the Colonel is, an' when it comes to bein' fully informed on every p'int, from the valyoo of queens-up before the draw to the political effect of the Declaration of Independence, he's an even break with Doc Peets. An' as I've asserted frequent—an' I don't pinch down a chip—Doc Peets is the finest eddicated sharp in Arizona.

"We-all will pass up the tale at this crisis, but I'll tell you later about how Colonel Sterett comes

a-weavin' into Wolfville that time an' founds the *Coyote*. It's enough now to know that when these yere printers takes to ghost-dancin' that time, the Colonel has been in our midst crowdin' hard on the hocks of a year, an' is held in high regyard by Old Man Enright, Doc Peets, Jack Moore, Boggs, Tutt, Cherokee Hall, Faro Nell, and other molders of local opinion, an' sort o' trails in next after Enright an' Peets in public esteem. The Colonel is shore listened to an' heeded at sech epocks as Wolfville sets down serious to think.

"Them printers of the Colonel's stampedes themse'fs jest followin' the latter's misonderstandin' with Huggins, who conducts the Bird Cage Op'ry House, an' who as I've allers maintained, incites them mechanics, private, to rebellion, as a scheme of revenge on the Colonel. The trouble which bears its final froote in this labor uprisin' is like this. Huggins, as noted, holds down the Bird Cage Op'ry House as manager, an' when he's drunk—which, seein' that Huggins is a bigger sot than Old Monte, is right along—he allows he's a 'Impressario.' Mebby you saveys 'Impressario,' an' experiences no difficulty with the same as a term, but Boggs an' Tutt goes to the fringe of a gun play dispootin' about its meanin' the time Huggins plays it on the camp first as deescriptif of his game.

"'A Impressario is a fiddler,' says Boggs; 'I cuts the trail of one in the States once, ropes him up, an' we has a shore enough time.'

"'Sech observations,' observes Tutt, to whom

Boggs vouchsafes this information, 'sech observations make me tired. They displays the onlimited ability for ignorance of the hooman mind. Boggs, I don't want to be deemed insultin', but you-all oughter go to night-school some'ers ontil you learns the roodiments of the American language.'

"When this yere colloquy ensooes, I'm away on the spring round-up, an' tharfor not present tharat; but as good a jedge as Jack Moore insists that the remainder of the conversation would have come off in the smoke if he hadn't, in his capacity of marshal, pulled his six-shooter an' invoked Boggs an' Tutt to a ca'mer mood.

"But speakin' of this Huggins party, I never likes him. Aside from his bein' mostly drunk, which, no matter what some may say or think, I holds impairs a gent's valyoo as a social factor, Huggins is avaricious an' dotes on money to the p'int of bein' sordid. He'd gloat over a dollar like it was a charlotte roose, Huggins would. So, as I says, I ain't fond of Huggins, an' takes no more pleasure of his company than if he's a wet dog. Still, thar's sech a thing as dooty; so, when Huggins comes wanderin' wild-eyed into the Red Light about first drink time one evenin', an' confides to me in a whisper that thar's a jack rabbit outside which has sworn to take his life, an' is right then bushwhackin' about the door waitin' to execoote the threat, I calls Doc Peets, an' aids in tyin' Huggins down so that his visions can be met an' coped with medical.

"Peets rides herd on Huggins for about a week, an' at last effects his rescoo from that hostile jack rabbit an' them crimson rattlesnakes an' blue-winged bats that has j'ined dogs with it in its attempts ag'in Huggins. Later, when Peets sends his charges, this yere ingrate Huggins—lovin' money as I states—wants to squar' it with a quart or two of whiskey checks on the Bird Cage bar. Nacherally, Peets waves aside sech ignoble proffers as insults to his professional standin'.

"'An' you-all don't owe me a splinter, Huggins,' says Peets, as he turns down the prop'sition to take whiskey checks as his reward. 'We'll jest call them services of mine in subdooin' your delirium treemors a contreebution. It should shorely be remooneration enough to know that I've preserved you to the Wolfville public, an' that the camp can still boast the possession of the meanest sport an' profoundest drunkard outside of the Texas Panhandle.'

"Bar none, Doc Peets is the bitterest gent, verbal, that ever makes a moccasin track in the Southwest. An' while Huggins ain't pleased none, them strictures has to go. To take to pawin' 'round for turmoil with Peets would be encroachin' onto the ediotic. Even if he emerges alive from sech controversies—an' it's four to one he wouldn't; for Peets, who's allers framed up with a brace of derringers, is about as vivid an enterprise as Wolfville affords—the Stranglers would convene with Old Man Enright in the cha'r, an' Huggins wouldn't

last as long as a drink of whiskey. As it is, Huggins gulps his feelin's an' offers nothin' in return to Peets's remarks.

"No; of course Doc Peets ain't that diffusive in his confidences as to go surgin' about tellin' this story to every gent he meets. It's ag'in roole for physicians that a-way to go draggin' their lariats 'round permiscus an' impartin' all they knows. You-all can see yourse'f that if physicians is that ingenuous, it would prodooce all sorts of troubles in the most onlooked-for places an' most onexpected forms. No; Peets wouldn't give way to conduct so onbecomin' a medicine man an' a sport. But rooles has their exceptions; an' so Peets, in one of them moments of sympathy an' confidence, which two highly eddicated gents after the eighth drink is bound to feel for each other, relates to Colonel Sterett concernin' Huggins an' his perfidy with them Bird Cage checks.

"This yere onbosomin' of himse'f to the Colonel ain't none discreet of Peets. The Colonel has many excellencies, but keepin' secrets ain't among 'em; none whatever. The Colonel is deevoid of talents for secrets, an' so the next day he prints this yere outrage onder a derisive headline touchin' Huggins' froogality.

"Huggins don't grade over-high for nerve an' is a long way from bein' clean strain game; but he figgers, so I allers reckons, that the Colonel ain't no thunderbolt of war himse'f, so when he reads as to him an' Peets an' them treemors an' the whiskey

checks, he starts in to drink an' discuss about his honor, an' gives it out he'll have revenge.

"It's the barkeep at the Red Light posts Colonel Sterett as to them perils. A Mexican comes trackin' along into the Colonel's room in the second story—what he calls his 'sanctum'—with a note. It's from the barkeep an' reads like this:

RED LIGHT SALOON.

DEAR COLONEL:—

Huggins is in here tankin' up an' makin' war medicine. He's packin' two guns. He says he's going to plug you for that piece. I can keep him here an hour. Meanwhile, heel yourse'f. I'll have him so drunk by the time he leaves that he ought to be easy.

Yours sincerely,

BLACK JACK.

P. S. Better send over to the Express Company for one of them shot-guns. Buckshot, that a-way, is a cinch; an' if you're a leetle nervous it don't make no difference.

B. J.

"About the time the 10-gauge comes over to the Colonel, with the compliments of the Wells-Fargo Express, an' twenty shells holdin' twenty-one buckshot to the shell, Doc Peets himse'f comes sa'nterin' into the sanctum.

"'You-all ought never to have printed it, Colonel,' says Peets; 'I'm plumb chagrined over that exposure of Huggins.'

"'Don't you reckon, Doc,' says the Colonel, sort o' coaxin' the play, 'if you was to go down to the Red Light an' say to this inebriated miscreant

that you makes good, it would steady him down a whole lot?'

"'If I was to take sech steps as you urges, Colonel,' says Peets, 'it would come out how I gives away the secrets of my patients; it would hurt my p'sition. On the level! Colonel, I'd a mighty sight sooner you'd beef Huggins.'

"'But see yere, Doc,' remonstrates the Colonel, wipin' off the water on his fore'ead, 'murder is new to me, an' I shrinks from it. Another thing—I don't thirst to do no five or ten years at Leavenworth for downin' Huggins, an' all on account of you declinin' whiskey chips as a honorarium for them services.'

"'It ain't no question of Leavenworth,' argues Peets; 'sech thoughts is figments. Yere's how it'll be. Huggins comes chargin' up, hungerin' for blood. You-all is r'ared back yere with that 10-gauge, all organized, an' you coldly downs him. Thar ain't no jury, an' thar ain't no Vigilance Committee, in Arizona, who's goin' to carp at that a little bit. Besides, he's that ornery, the game law is out on Huggins an' has been for some time. As for any resk to yourse'f, personal, from Huggins; why! Colonel, you snaps your fingers tharat. You hears Huggins on the stairs; an' you gives him both barrels the second he shows in the door. It's as plain as monte. Before Huggins can declar' himse'f, Colonel, he's yours, too dead to skin. It's sech a shore thing,' concloodes Peets, 'that, after all, since you're merely out for safety, I'd get him

in the wing, an' let it go at that. Once his arm is gone, it won't be no trouble to reason with Huggins.'

"'Don't talk to me about no arms,' retorts the Colonel, still moppin' his feachers plenty desperate. 'I ain't goin' to do no fancy shootin'. If Huggins shows up yere, you can put down a yellow stack on it, I'll bust him where he looks biggest. Huggins is goin' to take all the chances of this embroglio.'

"But Huggins never arrives. It's Dan Boggs who abates him an' assoomes the pressure for the Colonel. Boggs is grateful over some compliments the Colonel pays him in the *Coyote* the week previous. It's right in the midst of Huggins' prep'rations for blood that Boggs happens up on him in the Red Light.

"'See yere, Huggins,' says Boggs, as soon as ever he gets the Impressario's grievance straight in his mind, 'you-all is followin' off the wrong wagon track. The Colonel ain't your proper prey at all; it's me. I contreebutes that piece in the *Coyote* about you playin' it low on Peets myse'f.'

"Huggins gazes at Boggs an' never utters a word; Boggs is too many for him.

"'Which I'm the last sport,' observes Boggs after a pause, 'to put a limit on the reecreations or meddle with the picnics of any gent, but this yere voylence of yours, Huggins, has gone too far. I'm obleeged to say, tharfore, that onless you aims to furnish the painful spectacle of me bendin' a gun over your head, you had better sink into silence an'

pull your freight. I'm a slow, hard team to start, Huggins,' says Boggs, 'but once I goes into the collar, I'm irresist'ble.'

"Huggins don't know much, but he knows Boggs; an' so, followin' Boggs' remarks, Huggins ups an' ceases to clamor for the Colonel right thar. Lambs is bellig'rent compared with Huggins. The bar-keep, in the interests of peace, cuts in on the play with the news that the drinks is on the house, an' with that the eepisode comes to a close.

"Now you-all has most likely begun to marvel where them labor struggles comes buttin' in. We're within ropin' distance now. It's not made cl'ar, but, as I remarks prior, I allers felt like Huggins is the bug onder the chip when them printers gets hostile that time an' leaves the agency. Huggins ain't feeble enough mental to believe for a moment Boggs writes that piece. The fact that Boggs can't even write his own name—bein' onfortunately wantin' utterly in eddication—is of itse'f enough to breed doubts. Still, I don't ondervalue Huggins none in layin' down to Boggs, that time Boggs allows he's the author. With nothin' at stake more than a fact, an' no money up nor nothin', he shorely wouldn't be jestified in contendin' with a gent of Boggs' extravagant impulses, an' who is born with the theery that six-shooters is argyments.

"But, as I was observin', Huggins is no more misled by them bluffs of Boggs than he is likely to give up his thoughts of revenge on the Colonel. Bein' headed off from layin' for the Colonel direct—

for Boggs reminds him at closin' that, havin' asserted his personal respons'bility for that piece, he'll take it as affronts if Huggins persists in goin' projectin' 'round for Colonel Sterett—thar's no doubt in my mind that Huggins goes to slyin' about, an' jumpin' sideways at them printers on the quiet, an fillin' 'em up with nose-paint an' notions that they're wronged in equal quantities. An' Huggins gets results.

"Which the Colonel pays off his five printers every week. It's mebby the second Saturday after the Huggins trouble, an' the Colonel is jest finished measurin' up the 'strings,' as he calls 'em, an' disbursin' the *dinero*. At the finish, the head-printer stiffens up, an' the four others falls back a pace an' looks plenty hard.

"'Colonel,' says the head-printer, 'we-all sends on to the national council, wins out a charter, an' organizes ourse'fs into a union. You're yereby notified we claims union wages, the same bein' forty-five *centouse* a thousand ems from now ontil further orders.'

"'Jim,' retorts the Colonel, 'what you an' your noble assistants demands at my hands, goes. From now I pays the union schedoole, the same bein' five cents a thousand ems more than former. The *Coyote* as yet is not se'f-supportin'; but that shall not affect this play. I have so far made up deeficiencies by draw-poker, which I finds to be fairly soft an' certain in this camp, an' your su'gestions of a raise merely means that I've got to set up a leetle later in a game, an' be a trifle more remorseless on

a shore hand. Wharfore I yields to your requests with pleasure, as I says prior.'

"It's mighty likely Colonel Sterett acquiesces in them demands too quick; the printers is led to the thought that he's as simple to work as a Winchester. It's hooman nature to brand as many calves as you can, an' so no one's surprised when, two weeks later, them voracious printers comes frontin' up for more. The head-printer stiffens up, an' the four others assoomes eyes of iron, same as before, an' the pow wow re-opens as follows:

"'Colonel,' says the range boss for the printers, while the others stands lookin' an' listenin' like cattle with their y'ears all for'ard, 'Colonel, the chapel's had a meetin', an' we-all has decided that you've got to make back payments at union rates for the last six months, which is when we sends back to the States for that charter. The whole throw is twelve hundred dollars, or two hundred and forty a gent. No one wants to crowd your hand, Colonel, an' if you don't jest happen to have said twelve hundred in your war-bags, we allows you one week to jump 'round an' rustle it.'

"But the Colonel turns out bad, an' shows he can protect himse'f at printin' same as he can at poker. He whirls on them sharps like a mountain lion.

"'Gents,' says the Colonel, 'you-all is up ag'inst it. I don't care none if the cathedral's had a meetin', I declines to bow to your claims. As I states before, I obtains the money to conduct this yere journal by playin' poker. Now I can't play no

ex post facto poker, nor get in on any reetroactive hands, which of itse'f displays your attitoode on this o'casion as onjust. What you-all asks is refoosed.'

"'See yere, Colonel,' says the head-printer, beginnin' to arch his back like he's goin' to buck some, 'don't put on no spurs to converse with us; an' don't think to stampede us none with them Latin bluffs you makes. You either pays union rates since February, or we goes p'intin' out for a strike.'

"'Strike!' says the Colonel, an' his tones is decisive, 'strike, says you! Which if you-all will wait till I gets my coat, I'll strike with you.'

"Tharupon the entire passel, the Colonel an' them five printers, comes over to the Red Light, takes a drink on the Colonel, an' disperses themse'fs on the strike. Of course Wolfville looks on some amazed at this yere labor movement, but declar's itse'f nootral.

"'Let every gent skin his own eel,' says Enright; 'the same bein' a fav'rite proverb back in Tennessee when I'm a yooth. This collision between Colonel Sterett an' them free an' independent printers he has in his herd is shorely what may be called a private game. Thar's no reason an' no call for the camp to be heard. What's your idee, Doc?'

"'I yoonites with you in them statements,' says Peets. 'While my personal symp'thies is with Colonel Sterett in this involvement, as yet the sityooation offers no reason for the public to saddle up an' go to ridin' 'round tharin.'

"'Don't you-all think,' says Boggs, appealin' to Enright, 'don't you reckon now if me an' Tutt an' Jack Moore, all casooal like, was to take our guns an' go cuttin' up the dust about the moccasins of them malcontent printers—merely in our private capacity, I means—it would he'p solve this yere deadlock a whole lot?' Boggs is a heap headlong that a-way, an' likin' the Colonel, nacherally he's eager to take his end.

"'Boggs,' replies Enright, an' his tones is stern to the verge of being ferocious; 'Boggs, onless you wants the law-abidin' element to hang you in hobbles, you had better hold yourse'f in more subjection. Moreover, what you proposes is childish. If you was to appear in the midst of this industr'al excitement, an' take to romancin' 'round as you su'gests, you'd chase every one of these yere printers plumb off the range. Which they'd hit a few high places in the landscape an' be gone for good. Then the Colonel never could get out that *Coyote* paper no more. Let the Colonel fill his hand an' play it his own way. I'll bet, an' go as far as you like, that if we-all turns our backs on this, an' don't take to pesterin' either side, the Colonel has them parties all back in the corral ag'in inside of a week.'

"Old Man Enright is right, same as he ever is. It's about fourth drink time in the evenin' of the second day. Colonel Sterett, who's been consoomin' his licker at intervals not too long apart, is seated in the Red Light in a reelaxed mood. He's sayin' to Boggs, who has been faithful at his elbow

from the first, so as to keep up his sperits, that he looks on this strike as affordin' him a much-needed rest.

"'An' from the standp'int of rest, Dan,' observes the Colonel to Boggs as the barkeep brings them fresh glasses, 'I really welcomes this difference with them blacksmiths of mine. I shorely needs this lay-off; literatoor that a-way, Dan, an' partic'lar daily paper literatoor of the elevated character I've been sawin' off on this camp in the *Coyote*, is fatiguin' to the limit. When them misguided parties surrenders their absurd demands—an' between us, Dan, I smells Huggins in this an' expects to lay for him later tharfor—I say, when these obtoose printers gives up, an' returns to their 'llegiance, I'll assoome the tripod like a giant refreshed.'

"'That's whatever!' says Boggs, coincidin' with the Colonel, though he ain't none shore as to his drift.

"'I'll be recooperated,' continues the Colonel, sloppin' out another drink; 'I'll be a new man when I takes hold ag'in, an' will make the *Coyote*, ever the leadin' medium of the Southwest, as strong an' invincible as four kings an' a ace.'

"It's at this p'int the five who's on the warpath comes into the Red Light. The head-printer, lookin' apol'getic an' dejected, j'ins Boggs an' the Colonel where they sits.

"'Colonel,' observes the head-printer, 'the chapel's had another meetin'; an' the short an' the long is, the boys kind o' figger they're onjust in

them demands for back pay—sort o' overplays their hands. They've decided, Colonel, that you're dead right; an' I'm yere now to say we're sorry, an' we'll all go back an' open up an' get the *Coyote* out ag'in in old-time form.'

"'Have a drink, Jim,' says the Colonel, an' his face has a cloud of regrets onto it; 'take four fingers of this red-eye an' cheer up. You-all assoomes too sombre a view of this contention.'

"'I'm obleeged to you, Colonel,' replies the head-printer; 'but I don't much care to drink none before the boys. They ain't got no bank-roll an' no credit like you has, Colonel—that's what makes them see their errors—an' the plain trooth is they ain't had nothin' to drink for twenty-four hours. That's why I don't take nothin'. It would shore seem invidious for me to be settin' yere h'istin' in my nose-paint, an' my pore comrades lookin' he'plessly on; that's whatever! I'm too much a friend of labor to do it, Colonel.'

"'What!' says Boggs, quite wrought up; 'do you-all mean to tell me them onhappy sports ain't had a drink since yesterday? It's a stain on the camp! Whoopee, barkeep! see what them gents will have; an' keep seein' what they'll have endoorin' this conference.'

"'Jim,' says the Colonel, mighty reluctant, 'ain't you-all abandonin' your p'sition prematoor? Thar's somethin' doo to a principle, Jim. I'd rather looked for a continyooation of this estrangement for a while at least. I'd shore take time to consider it before ever I'd let this strike c'llapse.'

"'That's all right, Colonel,' says the head-printer, 'about c'llapsin'; an' I onderstands your feelin's an' symp'thises tharwith. But I've explained to you the financial condition of this movement. Thar stands the boys, pourin' in the first fire-water that has passed their lips for a day. An' you knows, Colonel, no gent, nor set of gents, can conduct strikes to a successful issue without whiskey.'

"'But, Jim,' pleads the Colonel, who hates to come off his vacation, 'if I fixes the Red Light say for fifteen drinks all 'round each day, don't you reckon you can prevail on them recalcitrant printers to put this reeconciliation off a week?'

"However, Enright, who at this p'int comes trailin' in, takes up the head-printer's side, an' shows the Colonel it's his dooty.

"'You owes it to the Wolfville public, Colonel,' says Enright. 'The *Coyote* has now been suppressed two days. We-all has been deprived of our daily enlightenment an' our intellects is boggin' down. For two entire days Wolfville has been in darkness as to worldly events, an' is right now knockin' 'round in the problem of existence like a blind dog in a meat shop. Your attitoode of delay, Colonel, is impossible; the public requests your return. If you ain't back at the *Coyote* office to-morry mornin' by second drink time, dealin' your wonted game, I wouldn't ondertake to state what shape a jest pop'lar resentment will assoome.'

"'An', of course,' observes the Colonel with a sigh, 'when you-all puts it in that loocid an' convincin' way, Enright, thar's no more to be said. The strike is now over an' the last kyard dealt. Jim, you an' me an' them printers will return to the vineyard of our efforts. This overwork may be onderminin' me, but Wolfville shall not call to me in vain.'"

CHAPTER II.

The Grinding of Dave Tutt.

"YES," said the Old Cattleman, as he took off his sombrero and contemplated the rattlesnake band which environed the crown, "cow-punchers is queer people. They needs a heap of watchin' an' herdin'. I knowed one by the name of Stevenson down on the Turkey Track, as merits plenty of lookin' after. This yere Stevenson ain't exactly ornery; but bein' restless, an' with a disp'sition to be emphatic whenever he's fillin' himse'f up, keepin' your eye on him is good, safe jedgment. He is public-sperited, too, an' sometimes takes lots of pains to please folks an' be pop'lar.

"I recalls once when we're bringin' up a beef herd from the Panhandle country. We're ag'in the south bank of the Arkansaw, tryin' to throw the herd across. Thar's a bridge, but the natifs allows it's plenty weak, so we're makin' the herd swim. Steve is posted at the mouth of the bridge, to turn back any loose cattle that takes a notion to try an' cross that a-way. Thar's nothin' much to

engage Steve's faculties, an' he's a-settin' on his bronco, an' both is mighty near asleep. Some women people—from the far East, I reckons—as is camped in town, comes over on the bridge to see us cross the herd. They've lined out clost up to Steve, a-leanin' of their young Eastern chins on the top rail.

"'Which I don't regyard this much,' says one young woman; 'thar's no thrill into it. Whyever don't they do somethin' excitin'?'

"Steve observes with chagrin that this yere lady is displeased; an', as he can't figger nothin' else out quick to entertain her, he gives a whoop, slams his six-shooter off into the scenery, socks his spurs into the pony, an' hops himse'f over the side of the bridge a whole lot into the shallow water below. The jump is some twenty feet an' busts the pony's laigs like toothpicks; also it breaks Steve s collar-bone an' disperses his feachers 'round some free an' frightful on account of his sort o' lightin' on his face.

"Well, we shoots the pony: an' Steve rides in the grub wagon four or five days recooperatin'. It s jest the mercy of hell he don't break his neck.

"'Whatever do you jump off for?' I asks Steve when he's comin' 'round.

"'Which I performs said equestrianisms to amoose that she-shorthorn who is cussin' us out,' says Steve 'I ain't permittin' for her to go back to the States, malignin' of us cow-men.'

"Steve gets himse'f downed a year after, an'

strikes out for new ranges in the skies. He's over on the upper Red River when he gets creased. He's settin' into a poker game.

" Steve never oughter gambled none. He is a good cow-boy—splendid round-up hand—an' can do his day's work with rope or iron in a brandin' pen with anybody; but comin' right to cases, he don't know no more about playin' poker than he does about preachin'. Actooally, he'd back two pa'r like thar's no record of their bein' beat. This yere, of course, leads to frequent poverty, but it don't confer no wisdom on Steve.

" On this o'casion, when they ships Steve for the realms of light, one of the boys gets a trey-full; Steve being possessed of a heart flush, nine at the head. In two minutes he don't have even his blankets left.

" After he's broke, Steve h'ists in a drink or two an' sours 'round a whole lot; an' jest as the trey-full boy gets into his saddle, Steve comes roamin' along up an' hails him.

" ' Pard,' says Steve, a heap gloomy, ' I've been tryin' to school myse'f to b'ar it, but it don't go. Tharfore, I'm yere to say you steals that pa'r of kings as completed my rooin. Comin' to them decisions, I'm goin' to call on you for that bric-a-brac I lose, an' I looks to gain some fav'rable replies.'

" ' Oh, you do, do you!' says the trey-full boy. ' Which you-all is a heap too sanguine. Do you reckon I gives up the frootes of a trey-full—as hard a hand to hold as that is? You can go ten to

one I won't: not this round-up! Sech requests is preepost'rous!'

"'Don't wax flippant about this yere robbery, says Steve. 'It's enough to be plundered without bein' insulted by gayeties. Now, what I says is this: Either I gets my stuff, or I severs our relations with a gun.' An' tharupon Steve pulls his pistol an' takes hold of the trey-full boy's bridle.

"'If thar's one thing makes me more weary than another,' says the trey-full boy, 'it's a gun play; an' to avoid sech exhibitions I freely returns your plunder. But you an' me don't play kyards no more.'

"Whereupon, the trey-full boy gets off his hoss, an' Steve, allowin' the debate is closed, puts up his gun. Steve is preematoor. The next second, 'bang!' goes the trey-full boy's six-shooter, the bullet gets Steve in the neck, with them heavenly results I yeretofore onfolds, an' at first drink time that evenin' we has a hasty but successful fooneral.

"'I don't reckon,' says Wat Peacock, who is range boss, 'thar's need of havin' any law-suits about this yere killin'. I knows Steve for long an' likes him. But I'm yere to announce that them idees he fosters concernin' the valyoo of poker hands, onreasonable an' plumb extrav'gant as they shorely is, absolootely preeclooded Steve's reachin' to old age. An' Steve has warnin's. Once when he tries to get his life insured down in Austin, he's refoosed.

"'"In a five-hand game, table stakes, what is a

pair of aces worth before the draw?" is one of them questions that company asks.

"'"Table stakes?" says Steve. "Every chip you've got."

"'"That settles it," says the company; "we don't want no sech resk. Thar never is sech recklessness! You won't live a year; you're lucky to be alive right now." An' they declines to insure Steve.'

"However," continued my friend musingly, "I've been puttin' it up to myself, that mighty likely I does wrong to tell you these yere tales. Which you're ignorant of cow folks, an' for me to go onloadin' of sech revelations mebby gives you impressions that's a lot erroneous. Now I reckons from that one eepisode you half figgers cow people is morose an' ferocious as a bunch?"

As the old gentleman gave his tones the inflection of inquiry, I hastened to interpose divers flattering denials. His recitals had inspired an admiration for cow men rather than the reverse.

This setting forth of my approval pleased him. He gave me his word that I in no sort assumed too much in the matter. Cow men, he asserted, were a light-hearted brood; over-cheerful, perhaps, at times, and seeking amusement in ways beyond the understanding of the East; but safe, upright, and of splendid generosity. Eager to correct within me any mal-effects of the tragedy just told, he recalled the story of a Tucson day of merry relaxation with Dave Tutt. He opined that it furnished a picture of the people of cows in lighter,

brighter colors, and so gave me details with a sketchy gladness.

"Which you're acc'rate in them thoughts," he said, referring to my word that I held cow folk to be engaging characters. After elevating his spirit with a clove, he went forward. "Thar ain't much paw an' bellow to a cowboy. Speakin' gen'ral, an' not allowin' for them inflooences which disturbs none —I adverts to mescal an' monte, an' sech abnormalities—he's passive an' easy; no more harm into him than a jack rabbit.

"Of course he has his moods to be merry, an' mebby thar's hours when he's gay to the p'int of over-play. But his heart's as straight as a rifle bar'l every time.

"It's a day I puts in with Dave Tutt which makes what these yere law-sharps calls 'a case in p'int,' an' which I relates without reserve. It gives you some notion of how a cowboy, havin' a leesure hour, onbuckles an' is happy nacheral.

"This yere is prior to Dave weddin' Tucson Jennie. I'm pirootin' 'round Tucson with Dave at the time. Dave's workin' a small bunch of cattle, 'way over near the Cow Springs, an' is in Tucson for a rest. We've been sloshin' 'round the Oriental all day, findin' new virchoos in the whiskey, an' amoosin' ourse'fs at our own expense, when about fifth drink time in the evenin' Dave allows he's some sick of sech revels, an' concloods he'll p'int out among the 'dobys, sort o' explorin' things up a lot. Which we tharupon goes in concert.

"I ain't frothin' at the mouth none to go myse'f, not seein' reelaxation in pokin' about permiscus among a passel of Mexicans, an' me loathin' of 'em from birth; but I goes, aimin' to ride herd on Dave. Which his disp'sition is some free an' various; an' bein' among Mexicans, that a-way, he's liable to mix himse'f into trouble. Not that Dave is bad, none whatever; but bein' seven or eight drinks winner, an' of that Oriental whiskey, too, it broadens him an' makes him feel friendly, an' deloodes him into claimin' acquaintance with people he never does know, an' refoosin' to onderstand how they shows symptoms of doubt. So we capers along; Dave warblin' 'The Death of Sam Bass' in the coyote key.

"The señoras an' señoritas, hearin' the row, would look out an' smile, an' Dave would wave his big hat an' whoop from glee. If he starts toward 'em, aimin' for a powwow—which he does frequent, bein' a mighty amiable gent that a-way—they carols forth a squawk immediate an' shets the door. Dave goes on. Mebby he gives the door a kick or two, a-proclaimin' of his discontent.

"All at once, while we're prowlin' up one of them spacious alleys a Mexican thinks is a street, we comes up on a Eytalian with a music outfit which he's grindin'. This yere music ain't so bad, an' I hears a heap worse strains. As soon as Dave sees him he tries to figger on a dance, but the 'local talent' declines to dance with him.

"'In which event,' says Dave, 'I plays a lone hand.'

"So Dave puts up a small dance, like a Navajo, accompanyin' of himse'f with outcries same as a Injun. But the Eytalian don't play Dave's kind of music, an' the *baile* comes to a halt.

"'Whatever is the matter with this yere tune-box, anyhow?' says Dave. 'Gimme the music for a green-corn dance, an' don't make no delay.'

"'This yere gent can't play no green-corn dance,' I says.

"'He can't, can't he?' says Dave; 'wait till he ropes at it once. I knows this gent of yore. I meets him two years ago in El Paso; which me an' him shorely shakes up that village.'

"'Whatever is his name, then?' I asks.

"'Antonio Marino,' says the Eytalian.

"'Merino?' says Dave; 'that's right. I recalls it, 'cause it makes me think at the jump he's a sheep man, an' I gets plumb hostile.'

"'I never sees you,' says the Eytalian.

"'Yes you do,' says Dave; 'you jest think you didn't see me. We drinks together, an' goes out an' shoots up the camp, arm an' arm.'

"But the Eytalian insists he never meets Dave. This makes Dave ugly a lot, an' before I gets to butt in an' stop it, he outs with his six-shooter, an' puts a hole into the music-box.

"'These yere tunes I hears so far,' says Dave, 'is too frivolous; I figgers that oughter sober 'em down a whole lot.'

"When Dave shoots, the Eytalian party heaves the strap of his hewgag over his head, an' flies.

Dave grabs the music-box, keepin' it from fallin', an' then begins turnin' the crank to try it. It plays all right, only every now an' then thar's a hole into the melody like it's lost a tooth.

"'This yere's good enough for a dog!' says Dave, a-twistin' away on the handle. 'Where's this yere Merino? Whatever is the matter with that shorthorn? Why don't he stand his hand?'

"But Merino ain't noomerous no more; so Dave allows it's a shame to let it go that a-way, an' Mexicans sufferin' for melody. With that he straps on the tune-box, an' roams 'round from one 'doby to another, turnin' it loose.

"'How long does Merino deal his tunes,' says Dave, 'before he c'llects? However, I makes new rooles for the game, right yere. I plays these cadences five minutes; an' then I gets action on 'em for five. I splits even with these Mexicans, which is shorely fair.'

"So Dave twists away for five minutes, an' me a-timin' of him, an' then leans the hewgag up ag'in a 'doby, an' starts in to make a round-up. He'll tackle a household, sort o' terrorisin' at 'em with his gun; an' tharupon the members gets that generous they even negotiates loans an' thrusts them proceeds on Dave. That's right; they're that ambitious to donate.

"One time he runs up on a band of tenderfeet, who's skallyhootin' 'round; an' they comes up an' bends their y'ears a-while. They're turnin' to go jest before c'llectin' time.

"'Hold on,' says Dave, pickin' up his Colt's offen the top of the hewgag; 'don't get cold feet. Which I've seen people turn that kyard in church, but you bet you don't jump no game of mine that a-way. You-all line up ag'in the wall thar ontil I tucks the blankets in on this yere outbreak in F flat, an' I'll be with you.'

"When Dave winds up, he goes along the line of them tremblin' towerists, an' they contreebutes 'leven dollars.

"'They aims to go stampedin' off with them nocturnes, an' 'peggios, an' arias, an' never say nothin',' says Dave; 'but they can't work no twist like that, an' me a-ridin' herd; none whatever.'

"Dave carries on sim'lar for three hours; an' what on splits, an' what on bets he wins, he's over a hundred dollars ahead. But at last he's plumb fatigued, an' allows he'll quit an' call it a day. So he packs the tom-tom down to Franklin's office. Franklin is marshal of Tucson, an' Dave turns over the layout an' the money, an' tells Franklin to round up Merino an' enrich him tharwith.

"'Where is this yere Dago?' says Franklin.

"'However do I know?' says Dave. 'Last I notes of him, he's canterin' off among the scenery like antelopes.'

"It's at this p'int Merino comes to view. He starts in to be a heap dejected about that bullet; but when he gets Dave's donation that a-way, his hopes revives. He begins to regyard it as a heap good scheme.

"'But you'll have to cirkle up to the alcalde, Tutt,' says Franklin. 'I ain't shore none you ain't been breakin' some law.'

"Dave grumbles, an' allows Tucson is gettin' a heap too staid for him.

"'It's gettin' so,' says Dave, 'a free American citizen don't obtain no encouragements. Yere I puts in half a day, amassin' wealth for a foreign gent who is settin' in bad luck; an' elevatin' Mexicans, who shorely needs it, an' for a finish I'm laid for by the marshal like a felon.'

"Well, we-all goes surgin' over to the alcalde's. Franklin, Dave an' the alcalde does a heap of pokin' about to see whatever crimes, if any, Dave's done. Which they gets by the capture of the hewgag, an' shootin' that bullet into its bowels don't bother 'em a bit. Even Dave's standin' up them towerists, an' the rapine that ensoos don't worry 'em none; but the question of the music itse'f sets the alcalde to buckin'.

"'I'm shorely depressed to say it, Dave,' says the alcalde, who is a sport named Steele, 'but you've been a-bustin' of ord'nances about playin' music on the street without no license.'

"'Can't we-all beat the game no way?' says Dave.

"'Which I shorely don't see how,' says the alcalde.

"'Nor me neither,' says Franklin.

"'Whatever is the matter with counter-brandin' them tunes over to Merino's license?' says Dave.

"'Can't do it nohow,' says the alcalde.

"'Well, is this yere ord'nance accordin' to Hoyle an' the Declaration of Independence?' says Dave. 'I don't stand it none onless.'

"'Shore!' says the alcalde.

"'Ante an' pass the buck, then,' says Dave. 'I'm a law-abidin' citizen, an' all I wants is a squar' deal from the warm deck.'

"So they fines Dave fifty dollars for playin' them harmonies without no license. Dave asks me later not to mention this yere outcome in Wolfville, an' I never does. But yere it's different."

CHAPTER III.

The Feud of Pickles.

"THAR'S a big crowd in Wolfville that June day." The Old Cattleman tilted his chair back and challenged my interest with his eye. "The corrals is full of pack mules an' bull teams an' wagon-trains; an' white men, Mexicans, half-breeds an' Injuns is a-mixin' an' meanderin' 'round, a-lyin' an' a-laughin' an' a-drinkin' of Red Light whiskey mighty profuse. Four or five mule skinners has their long limber sixteen-foot whips, which is loaded with dust-shot from butt to tip, an' is crackin' of 'em at a mark. I've seen one of these yere mule experts with the most easy, delicate, delib'rate twist of the wrist make his whip squirm in the air like a hurt snake; an' then he'll straighten it out with the crack of twenty rifles, an' the buckskin popper cuts a hole in a loose buffalo robe he's hung up; an' all without investin' two ounces of actooal strength. Several of us Wolfville gents is on the sidewalk in front of the O. K. Restauraw, applaudin' of the good shots, when Dave Tutt speaks up to Jack Moore, next to me, an' says:

"'Jack, you minds that old Navajo you downs over on the San Simon last Fall?'

"'I minds him mighty cl'ar,' says Jack. 'He's

stealin' my Alizan hoss at the time, an' I can prove it by his skelp on my bridle now.'

"'Well,' says Dave, p'intin' to a ornery, saddle-colored half-breed who's makin' himse'f some frequent, 'that Injun they calls "Pickles" is his nephy, an' you wants to look out a whole lot. I hears him allow that the killin' of his relatif is mighty rank, an' that he don't like it nohow.'

"'That's all right,' says Jack; 'Pickles an' me has been keepin' cases on each other an hour; an' I'll post you-all private, if he goes to play hoss a little bit, him an' his oncle will be able to talk things over before night.'

"Which it's mighty soon when Pickles comes along where we be.

"'Hello, Jack,' he says, an' his manner is insultin'; 'been makin' it smoky down on the old San Simon lately?'

"'No; not since last fall,' says Jack, plenty light an' free; 'an' now I thinks of it, I b'lieves I sees that Navajo hoss-thief of an oncle of yours when I'm down thar last. I ain't run up on him none lately, though. Where do you-all reckon he's done 'loped to?'

"'Can't say, myse'f,' says Pickles, with a kind o' wicked cheerfulness; 'our fam'ly has a round-up of itse'f over on B'ar Creek last spring, an' I don't count his nose among 'em none. Mebby he has an engagement, an' can't get thar. Mebby he's out squanderin' 'round in the high grass some'ers. Great man to go 'round permiscus, that Injun is.'

"'You see,' says Jack, 'I don't know but he might be dead. Which the time I speaks of, I'm settin' in camp one day. Something attracts me, an' I happens to look up, an' thar's my hoss, Alizan, with a perfect stranger on him, pitchin' an' buckin', an' it looks like he's goin' to cripple that stranger shore. Pickles, you knows me! I'd lose two hosses rather than have a gent I don't know none get hurt. So I grabs my Winchester an' allows to kill Alizan. But it's a new gun; an' you know what new sights is—coarse as sandburrs; you could drag a dog through 'em—an' I holds too high. I fetches the stranger, "bang!" right back of his left y'ear, an' the bullet comes outen his right y'ear. You can bet the limit, I never am so displeased with my shootin'. The idee of me holdin' four foot too high in a hundred yards! I never is that embarrassed! I'm so plumb disgusted an' ashamed, I don't go near that equestrian stranger till after I finishes my grub. Alizan, he comes up all shiverin' an' sweatin' an' stands thar; an' mebby in a hour or so I strolls out to the deceased. It shorely wearies me a whole lot when I sees him; he's nothin' but a common Digger buck. You can drink on it if I ain't relieved. Bein' a no-account Injun, of course, I don't paw him over much for brands; but do you know, Pickles, from the casooal glance I gives, it strikes me at the time it's mighty likely to be your oncle. This old bronco fancier's skelp is over on my bridle, if you thinks you'd know it.'

"'No,' says Pickles, mighty onconcerned, 'it

can't be my oncle nohow. If he's one of my fam'ly, it would be your ha'r on his bridle. It must be some old shorthorn of a Mohave you downs. Let's all take a drink on it.'

"So we-all goes weavin' over to the Red Light, Jack an' Pickles surveyin' each other close an' interested, that a-way, an' the rest of us on the quee vee, to go swarmin' out of range if they takes to shootin'.

"'It's shore sad to part with friends,' says Pickles, as he secretes his nose-paint, 'but jest the same I must saddle an' stampede out of yere. I wants to see that old villyun, Tom Cooke, an' I don't reckon none I'll find him any this side of Prescott, neither. Be you thinkin' of leavin' camp yourse'f, Jack?'

"'I don't put it up I'll leave for a long time,' says Jack. 'Mebby not for a month—mebby it's even years before I go wanderin' off—so don't go to makin' no friendly, quiet waits for me nowhere along the route, Pickles, 'cause you'd most likely run out of water or chuck or something before ever I trails up.'

"It ain't long when Pickles saddles up an' comes chargin' 'round on his little buckskin hoss. Pickles takes to cuttin' all manner of tricks, reachin' for things on the ground, snatchin' off Mexicans' hats, an' jumpin' his pony over wagon tongues an' camp fixin's. All the time he's whoopin' an' yellin' an' carryin' on, an havin' a high time all by himse'f. Which you can see he's gettin' up his blood an' nerve, reg'lar Injun fashion.

"Next he takes down his rope an' goes to whirlin' that. Two or three times he comes flashin' by where we be, an' I looks to see him make a try at Jack. But he's too far back, or thar's too many 'round Jack, or Pickles can't get the distance, or something; for he don't throw it none, but jest keeps yellin' an' ridin' louder an' faster. Pickles shorely puts up a heap of riot that a-way! It's now that Enright calls to Pickles.

"'Look yere, Pickles,' he says, 'I've passed the word to the five best guns in camp to curl you up if you pitch that rope once. Bein' as the news concerns you, personal, I allows it's nothin' more'n friendly to tell you. Then ag'in, I don't like to lose the Red Light sech a customer like you till it's a plumb case of crowd.'

"When Enright vouchsafes this warnin', Pickles swings down an' leaves his pony standin', an' comes over.

"'Do you know, Jack,' he says, 'I don't like the onrespectful tones wherein you talks of Injuns. I'm Injun, part, myse'f, an' I don't like it.'

"'No?' says Jack; 'I s'pose that's a fact, too. An' yet, Pickles, not intendin' nothin' personal, for I wouldn't be personal with a prairie dog, I'm not only onrespectful of Injuns, an' thinks the gov'ment ought to pay a bounty for their skelps, but I states beliefs that a hoss-stealin', skulkin' mongrel of a half-breed is lower yet; I holdin' he ain't even people—ain't nothin', in fact. But to change the subjeck, as well as open an avenoo for another

round of drinks, I'll gamble, Pickles, that you-all stole that hoss down thar, an' that the "7K" brand on his shoulder ain't no brand at all, but picked on with the p'int of a knife.'

"When Jack puts it all over Pickles that a-way, we looks for shootin' shore. But Pickles can't steady himse'f on the call. He's like ponies I've met. He'll ride right at a thing as though he's goin' plumb through or over, an' at the last second he quits an' flinches an' weakens. Son, it ain't Pickles' fault. Thar ain't no breed of gent but the pure white who can play a desp'rate deal down through, an' call the turn for life or death at the close; an' Pickles, that a-way, is only half white. So he laughs sort o' ugly at Jack's bluff, an' allows he orders drinks without no wagers.

"'An' then, Jack,' he says, 'I wants you to come feed with me. I'll have Missis Rucker burn us up something right.'

"'I'll go you,' says Jack, 'if it ain't nothin' but salt hoss.'

"'I'll fix you-all folks up a feed,' says Missis Rucker, a heap grim, 'but you don't do no banquetin' in no dinin' room of mine. I'll spread your grub in the camp-house, t'other side the corral, an' you-all can then be as sociable an' smoky as you please. Which you'll be alone over thar, an' can conduct the reepast in any fashion to suit yourse'fs. But you don't get into the dinin' room reg'lar, an' go to weedin' out my boarders accidental, with them feuds of yours.'

"After a little, their grub's got ready in the camp house. It's a jo-darter of a feed, with cake, pie, airtights, an' the full game, an' Jack an' Pickles walks over side an' side. They goes in alone an' shets the door. In about five minutes, thar's some emphatic remarks by two six-shooters, an' we-all goes chargin' to find out. We discovers Jack eatin' away all right; Pickles is the other side, with his head in his tin plate, his intellects runnin' out over his eye. Jack's shore subdooed that savage for all time.

"'It don't look like Pickles is hungry none,' says Jack.

"They both pulls their weepons as they sets down, an' puts 'em in their laps; but bein' bred across, that a-way, Pickles can't stand the strain. He gets nervous an' grabs for his gun; the muzzle catches onder the table-top, an' thar's his bullet all safe in the wood. Jack, bein' clean strain American, has better luck, an' Pickles is got. Shore, it's right an' on the squar'!

"'You sees,' says Dan Boggs, 'this killin's bound to be right from the jump. It comes off by Pickles' earnest desire; Jack couldn't refoose. He would have lost both skelp an' standin' if he had. Which, however, if this yere 'limination of Pickles has got to have a name, my idee is to call her a case of self-deestruction on Pickles' part, an' let it go at that.'"

CHAPTER IV.

Johnny Florer's Axle Grease.

It was the afternoon—cool and beautiful. I had been nursing my indolence with a cigar and one of the large arm-chairs which the veranda of the great hotel afforded. Now and then I considered within myself as to the whereabouts of my Old Cattleman, and was in a half humor to hunt him up. Just as my thoughts were hardening into decision in that behalf, a high, wavering note, evidently meant for song, came floating around the corner of the house, from the veranda on the end. The singer was out of range of eye, but I knew him for my aged friend. Thus he gave forth:

> "Dogville, Dogville!
> A tavern an' a still,
> That's all thar is in all Dog-ville."

"How do you feel to-day?" I asked as I took a chair near the venerable musician. "Happy and healthy, I trust?"

"Never feels better in my life," responded the Old Cattleman. "If I was to feel any better, I'd shorely go an' see a doctor."

"You are a singer, I observe."

"I'm melodious nacheral, but I'm gettin' so I sort o' stumbles in my notes. Shoutin' an' singin' 'round a passel of cattle to keep 'em from stampedin' on bad nights has sp'iled my voice, that a-way. Thar's nothin' so weakenin', vocal, as them efforts in the open air an' in the midst of the storms an' the elements. What for a song is that I'm renderin'? Son, I learns that ballad long ago, back when I'm a boy in old Tennessee. It's writ, word and music, by little Mollie Hines, who lives with her pap, old Homer Hines, over on the 'Possum Trot. Mollie Hines is shore a poet, an' has a mighty sight of fame, local. She's what you-all might call a jo-darter of a poet, Mollie is; an' let anythin' touchin' or romantic happen anywhere along the 'Possum Trot, so as to give her a subjeck, an' Mollie would be down on it, instanter, like a fallin' star. She shorely is a verse maker, an' is known in the Cumberland country as 'The Nightingale of Big Bone Lick.' I remembers when a Shylock over to the Dudleytown bank forecloses a mortgage on old Homer Hines, an' offers his settlements at public vandue that a-way, how Mollie prances out an' pours a poem into the miscreant. Thar's a hundred an' 'leven verses into it, an' each one like a bullet outen a Winchester. It goes like this:

"Thar's a word to be uttered to the rich man in his pride.
(Which a gent is frequent richest when it's jest before he died!)
Thar's a word to be uttered to the hawg a-eatin' truck.
(Which a hawg is frequent fattest when it's jest before he's stuck!)

"Mighty sperited epick, that! You recalls that English preacher sharp that comes squanderin' 'round the tavern yere for his health about a month ago? Shore! I knows you couldn't have overlooked no bet like that divine. Well, that night in them parlors, when he reads some rhymes in a book, —whatever is that piece he reads? Locksley Hall; right you be, son! As I was sayin', when he's through renderin' said Locksley Hall, he comes buttin' into a talk with me where I'm camped in a corner all cosy as a toad onder a cabbage leaf, reecoverin' myse'f with licker from them recitals of his, an' he says to me, this parson party does:

"'Which it's shorely a set-back America has no poets,' says he.

"'It's evident,' I says, 'that you never hears of Mollie Hines.'

"'No, never once,' he replies; 'is this yere Miss Hines a poet?'

"'Is Mollie Hines a poet!' I repeats, for my scorn at the mere idee kind o' stiffens its knees an' takes to buckin' some. 'Mollie Hines could make that Locksley Hall gent you was readin' from, or even the party who writes Watt's Hymns, go to the diskyard.' An' then I repeats some forty of them stanzas, whereof that one I jest now recites is a speciment.

"What does this pulpit gent say? He see I has him cinched, an' he's plumb mute. He confines himse'f to turnin' up his nose in disgust like Bill Storey does when his father-in-law horsewhips him."

Following this, the Old Cattleman and I wrapped ourselves in thoughtful smoke, for the space of five minutes, as ones who pondered the genius of "The Nightingale of Big Bone Lick"—Mollie Hines on the banks of the 'Possom Trot. At last my friend broke forth with a question.

"Whoever is them far-off folks you-all was tellin' me is related to Injuns?"

"The Japanese," I replied. "Undoubtedly the Indians and the Japanese are of the same stock."

"Which I'm foaled like a mule," said the old gentleman, "a complete prey to inborn notions ag'in Injuns. I wouldn't have one pesterin' 'round me more'n I'd eat offen the same plate with a snake. I shore has aversions to 'em a whole lot. Of course, I never sees them Japs, but I saveys Injuns from feathers to moccasins, an' comparin' Japs to Injuns, I feels about 'em like old Bill Rawlins says about his brother Jim's wife."

"And how was that?" I asked.

The afternoon was lazy and good, and I in a mood to listen to my rambling grey comrade talk of anybody or anything.

"It's this a-way," he began. "This yere Bill an' Jim Rawlins is brothers an' abides in Roanoke, Virginny. They splits up in their yooth, an' Jim goes p'intin' out for the West. Which he shore gets thar, an' nothin' is heard of him for forty years.

"Bill Rawlins, back in Roanoke, waxes a heap rich, an' at last cleans up his game an' resolves he takes a rest. Also he concloods to travel; an' as

long as he's goin' to travel, he allows he'll sort o' go projectin' 'round an' see if he can't locate Jim.

"He gets a old an' musty tip about Jim, this Bill Rawlins does, an' it works out all right. Bill cuts Jim's trail 'way out yonder on the Slope at a meetropolis called Los Angeles. But this yere Jim ain't thar none. The folks tells Bill they reckons Jim is over to Virginny City.

"It's a month later, an' Bill is romancin' along on one of them Nevada mountain-meadow trails, when he happens upon a low, squatty dugout, the same bein' a camp rather than a house, an' belongs with a hay ranche. In the door is standin' a most ornery seemin' gent, with long, tangled ha'r an' beard, an' his clothes looks like he's shorely witnessed times. The hands of this ha'ry gent is in his pockets, an' he exhibits a mighty soopercilious air. Bill pulls up his cayouse for a powwow.

"'How far is it to a place where I can camp down for the night?' asks Bill.

"'It's about twenty miles to the next wickeyup,' says the soopercilious gent.

"'Which I can't make it none to-night, then,' says Bill.

"'Not on that hoss,' says the soopercilious gent, for Bill's pony that a-way is plenty played.

"'Mebby, then,' says Bill, 'I'd better bunk in yere.'

"'You can gamble you-all don't sleep yere,' says the soopercilious gent; 'none whatever!'

"'An' why not?' asks Bill.

"'Because I won't let you,' says the soopercilious gent, a-bitin' off a piece of tobacco. 'This is my camp, an' force'ble invasions by casooal hold-ups like you, don't preevail with me a little bit. I resents the introosion on my privacy.'

"'But I'll have to sleep on these yere plains,' says Bill a heap plaintif.

"'Thar's better sports than you-all slept on them plains,' says the soopercilious gent.

"Meanwhile, thar's a move or two, speshully the way he bats his eyes, about this soopercilious gent that sets Bill to rummagin' 'round in his mem'ry. At last he asks:

"'Is your name Rawlins?'

"'Yes, sir, my name's Rawlins,' says the soopercilious gent.

"'Jim Rawlins of Roanoke?'

"'Jim Rawlins of Roanoke;' an' the soopercilious gent reaches inside the door of the dugout, searches forth a rifle an' pumps a cartridge into the bar'l.

"'Stan' your hand, Jim!' says Bill, at the same time slidin' to the ground with the hoss between him an' his relatif; 'don't get impetyoous. I'm your brother Bill.'

"'What!' says the soopercilious gent, abandonin' them hostile measures, an' joy settlin' over his face. 'What!' he says; 'you my brother Bill? Well, don't that beat grizzly b'ars amazin'! Come in, Bill, an' rest your hat. Which it's simply the tenderness of hell I don't miss you.'

"Whereupon Bill an' Jim tracks along inside an' goes to canvassin' up an' down as to what ensooes doorin' them forty years they've been parted. Jim wants to know all about Roanoke an' how things stacks up in old Virginny, an' he's chuckin' in his questions plenty rapid.

"While Bill's replyin', his eye is caught by a frightful-lookin' female who goes slyin' in an' out, a-organizin' of some grub. She's the color of a saddle, an' Bill can't make out whether she's a white, a Mexican, a Digger Injun or a nigger. An' she's that hideous, this female is, she comes mighty near givin' Bill heart failure. Son, you-all can't have no idee how turrible this person looks. She's so ugly the flies won't light on her. Yes, sir! ugly enough to bring sickness into a fam'ly. Bill can feel all sorts o' horrors stampedin' about in his frame as he gazes on her. Her eyes looks like two bullet holes in a board, an' the rest of her feachers is tetotaciously indeescrib'ble. Bill's intellects at the awful sight of this yere person almost loses their formation, as army gents would say. At last Bill gets in a question on his rapid-fire relatif, who's shootin' him up with queries touchin' Roanoke to beat a royal flush.

"'Jim,' says Bill, sort o' scared like, 'whoever is this yere lady who's roamin' the scene?'

"'Well, thar now!' says Jim, like he's plumb disgusted, 'I hope my gun may hang fire, if I don't forget to introdooce you! Bill, that's my wife.'

"Then Jim goes surgin' off all spraddled out

about the noomerous an' manifest excellencies of this female, an' holds forth alarmin' of an' concernin' her virchoos an' loveliness of face an' form, an' all to sech a scand'lous degree, Bill has to step outdoors to blush.

"'An', Bill,' goes on Jim, an' he's plumb rapturous, that a-way, 'may I never hold three of a kind ag'in, if she ain't got a sister who's as much like her as two poker chips. I'm co'tin' both of 'em mighty near four years before ever I can make up my mind whichever of 'em I needs. They're both so absolootely sim'lar for beauty, an' both that aloorin' to the heart, I simply can't tell how to set my stack down. At last, after four years, I ups an' cuts the kyards for it, an' wins out this one.'

"'Well, Jim,' says Bill, who's been settin' thar shudderin' through them rhapsodies, an' now an' then gettin' a glimpse of this yere female with the tail of his eye: 'Well, Jim, far be it from me, an' me your brother, to go avouchin' views to make you feel doobious of your choice. But candor's got the drop on me an' compels me to speak my thoughts. I never sees this sister of your wife, Jim, but jest the same, I'd a heap sight rather have her.'

"An' as I observes previous," concluded the old gentleman, "I feels about Japs an' Injuns like Bill does about Jim's wife that time. I never sees no Japs, but I'd a mighty sight rather have 'em."

There was another pause after this, and cigars were produced. For a time the smoke curled in silence. Then my friend again took up discussion.

"Thar comes few Injuns investigatin' into Wolfville. Doorin' them emutes of Cochise, an' Geronimo, an' Nana, the Apaches goes No'th an' South clost in by that camp of ours, but you bet! they're never that locoed as to rope once at Wolfville. We-all would shorely have admired to entertain them hostiles; but as I su'gests, they're a heap too enlightened to give us a chance.

"Savages never finds much encouragement to come ha'ntin' about Wolfville. About the first visitin' Injun meets with a contreetemps; though this is inadvertent a heap an' not designed. This buck, a Navajo, I takes it, from his feathers, has been pirootin' about for a day or two. At last I reckons he allows he'll eelope off into the foothills ag'in. As carryin' out them roode plans which he forms, he starts to scramble onto the Tucson stage jest as Old Monte's c'llectin' up his reins. But it don't go; Injuns is barred. The gyard, who's perched up in front next to Old Monte, pokes this yere aborigine in the middle of his face with the muzzle of his rifle; an' as the Injun goes tumblin', the stage starts, an' both wheels passes over him the longest way. That Injun gives a groan like twenty sinners, an' his lamp is out.

"Old Monte sets the brake an' climbs down an' sizes up the remainder. Then he gets back on the box, picks up his six hosses an' is gettin' out.

"'Yere, you!' says French, who's the Wells-Fargo agent, a-callin' after Old Monte, 'come back an' either plant your game or pack it with you.

I'm too busy a gent to let you or any other blinded drunkard go leavin' a fooneral at my door. Thar's enough to do here as it is, an' I don't want no dead Injuns on my hands.'

"'Don't put him up thar an' go sp'ilin' them mail-bags,' howls Old Monte, as French an' a hoss-hustler from inside the corral lays hold of the Navajo to throw him on with the baggage.

"'Then come down yere an' ride herd on the play yourse'f, you murderin' sot!' says French.

"An' with that, he shore cuts loose an' cusses Old Monte frightful; cusses till a cottonwood tree in front of the station sheds all its leaves, an' he deadens the grass for a hundred yards about.

"'Promotin' a sepulcher in this rock-ribbed landscape,' says French, as Jack Moore comes up, kind o' apol'gisin' for his profane voylence at Old Monte; 'framin' up a tomb, I say, in this yere rock-ribbed landscape ain't no child's play, an' I'm not allowin' none for that homicide Monte to put no sech tasks on me. He knows the Wolfville roole. Every gent skins his own polecats an' plants his own prey.'

"'That's whatever!' says Jack Moore, 'an' onless Old Monte is thirstin' for trouble in elab'rate forms, he acquiesces tharin.'

"With that Old Monte hitches the Navajo to the hind axle with a lariat which French brings out, an' then the stage, with the savage coastin' along behind, goes rackin' off to the No'th. Later, Monte an' the passengers hangs this yere remainder

up in a pine tree, at an Injun crossin' in the hills, as a warnin'. Whether it's a warnin' or no, we never learns; all that's shore is that the remainder an' the lariat is gone next day; but whatever idees the other Injuns entertains of the play is, as I once hears a lecture sharp promulgate, 'concealed with the customary stoicism of the American savage.'

"Most likely them antipathies of mine ag'in Injuns is a heap enhanced by what I experiences back on the old Jones an' Plummer trail, when they was wont to stampede our herds as we goes drivin' through the Injun Territory. Any little old dark night one of them savages is liable to come skulkin' up on the wind'ard side of the herd, flap a blanket, cut loose a yell, an' the next second thar's a hundred an' twenty thousand dollars' worth of property skally-hootin' off into space on frenzied hoofs. Next day, them same ontootered children of the woods an' fields would demand four bits for every head they he'ps round up an' return to the bunch. It's a source of savage revenoo, troo; but plumb irritatin'. Them Injuns corrals sometimes as much as a hundred dollars by sech treacheries. An' then we-all has to rest over one day to win it back at poker.

"Will Injuns gamble? Shore! an' to the limit at that! Of course, bein', as you saveys, a benighted people that a-way, they're some easy, havin' no more jedgment as to the valyoo of a hand than Steve Stevenson, an' Steve would take a pa'r of nines an' bet 'em higher than a cat's back. We

allers recovers our *dinero*, but thar's time an' sleep we lose an' don't get back.

"Yes, indeed, son, Injuns common is as ornery as soapweed. The only good you-all can say of 'em is, they're nacheral-born longhorns, is oncomplainin', an' saveys the West like my black boy saveys licker. One time—this yere is 'way back in my Texas days—one time I'm camped for long over on the Upper Hawgthief. It's rained a heap, an' bein' as I'm on low ground anyhow, it gets that soft an' swampy where I be it would bog a butterfly. For once I'm took sick; has a fever, that a-way. An' lose flesh! shorely you should have seen me! I falls off like persimmons after a frost, an' gets as ga'nt an' thin as a cow in April. So I allows I'll take a lay-off for a couple of months an' reecooperate some.

"Cossettin' an' pettin' of my health, as I states, I saddles up an' goes cavortin' over into the Osage nation to visit an old *compadre* of mine who's a trader thar by the name of Johnny Florer. This yere Florer is an old-timer with the Osages; been with 'em it's mighty likely twenty year at that time, an' is with 'em yet for all the notice I ever receives.

"On the o'casion of this ambassy of mine, I has a chance to study them savages, an' get a line on their char'cters a whole lot. This time I'm with Johnny, what you-all might call Osage upper circles is a heap torn by the ontoward rivalries of a brace of eminent bucks who's each strugglin' to

lead the fashion for the tribe an' raise the other out.

"Them Osages, while blanket Injuns, is plumb opulent. Thar's sixteen hundred of 'em, an' they has to themse'fs 1,500,000 acres of as good land as ever comes slippin' from the palm of the Infinite. Also, the gov'ment is weak-minded enough to confer on every one of 'em, each buck drawin' the *dinero* for his fam'ly, a hundred an' forty big iron dollars anyooally. Wherefore, as I observes, them Osages is plenty strong, financial.

"These yere two high-rollin' bucks I speaks of, who's strugglin' for the social soopremacy, is in the midst of them strifes while I'm visitin' Florer. It's some two moons prior when one of 'em, which we'll call him the 'Astor Injun,' takes a heavy fall out of the opp'sition by goin' over to Cherryvale an' buyin' a sooperannuated two-seat Rockaway buggy. To this he hooks up a span of ponies, loads in his squaws, an' p'rades 'round from Pawhusky to Greyhoss—the same bein' a couple of Osage camps—an' tharby redooces the enemy—what we'll name the 'Vanderbilt Injuns'—to desp'ration. The Astor savage shorely has the call with that Rockaway.

"But the Vanderbilt Osage is a heap hard to down. He takes one look at the Astor Injun's Rockaway with all its blindin' splendors, an' then goes streakin' it for Cherryvale, like a drunkard to a barbecue. An' he sees the Rockaway an' goes it several better. What do you-all reckon

now that savage equips himse'f with? He wins out a hearse, a good big black roomy hearse, with ploomes onto it an' glass winders in the sides.

"As soon as ever this Vanderbilt Injun stiffens his hand with the hearse, he comes troopin' back to camp with it, himse'f on the box drivin', an' puttin' on enough of lordly dog to make a pack of hounds. Which he shorely squelches the Astors; they jest simply lay down an' wept at sech grandeur. Their Rockaway ain't one, two, three,—ain't in the money.

"An' every day the Vanderbilt Injun would load his squaws an' papooses inside the hearse, an' thar, wropped in their blankets an' squattin' on the floor of the hearse for seats, they would be lookin' out o' the winders at common savages who ain't in it an' don't have no hearse. Meanwhiles, the buck Vanderbilt is drivin' the outfit all over an' 'round the cantonments, the entire bunch as sassy an' as flippant as a coop o' catbirds. It's all the Astors can do to keep from goin' plumb locoed. The Vanderbilts win.

"One mornin', when Florer an' me has jest run our brands onto the fourth drink, an old buck comes trailin' into the store. His blanket is pulled over his head, an' he's pantin' an' givin' it out he's powerful ill.

"'How is my father?' says Johnny in Osage.

"'Oh, my son,' says the Injun, placin' one hand on his stomach, an' all mighty tender, 'your father is plenty sick. Your father gets up this mornin',

an' his heart is very bad. You must give him medicine or your father will die.'

"Johnny passes the invalid a cinnamon stick an' exhorts him to chew on that, which he does prompt an' satisfactory, like cattle on their cud. This cinnamon keeps him steady for 'most five minutes.

"'Whatever is the matter with this savage?' I asks of Johnny.

"'Nothin' partic'lar,' says Johnny. 'Last night he comes pushin' in yere an' buys a bottle of Worcestershire sauce; an' then he gets gaudy an' quaffs it all up on a theery she's a new-fangled fire water. He gets away with the entire bottle. It's now he realizes them errors, an' takes to groanin' an' allowin' it gives him a bad heart. Which I should shorely admit as much!'

"'Your father is worse,' says the Osage, as he comes cuttin' in on Johnny ag'in. 'Must have stronger medicine. That medicine,' holdin' up some of the cinnamon, 'that not bad enough.'

"At this, Johnny passes his 'father' over a double handful of black pepper before it's ground.

"'Let my father get away with that,' says Johnny, 'an' he'll feel like a bird. It will make him gay an' full of p'isen, like a rattlesnake in August.'

"Out to the r'ar of Johnny's store is piled up onder a shed more'n two thousand boxes of axle grease. It was sent into the nation consigned to Johnny by some ill-advised sports in New York, who figgers that because the Osages as a tribe abounds in wagons, thar must shorely be a

market for axle grease. That's where them New York persons misses the ford a lot. Them savages has wagons, troo; but they no more thinks of greasin' them axles than paintin' the runnin' gear. They never goes ag'inst that axle grease game for so much as a single box; said ointment is a drug. When he don't dispose of it none, Johnny stores it out onder a shed some twenty rods away, an' regyards it as a total loss.

"'Axle grease,' says Johnny, 'makes a p'int in civilization to which the savage has not yet clambered, an' them optimists, East, who sends it on yere, should have never made no sech break.'

"Mebby it's because this axle grease grows sullen an' feels neglected that a-way; mebby it's the heats of two summers an' the frosts of two winters which sp'iles its disp'sition; shore it is at any rate that at the time I'm thar, that onguent seems fretted to the core, an' is givin' forth a protestin' fragrance that has stood off a coyote an' made him quit at a distance of two hundred yards. You might even say it has caused Nacher herself to pause an' catch her breath.

"It's when the ailin' Osage, whose malady is too deep-seated to be reached by cinnamon or pimento, comes frontin' up for a third preescription, that the axle grease idee seizes Johnny.

"'Father,' says Johnny, 'come with me. Your son will now saw off some big medicine on you; a medicine meant for full-blown gents like you an' me. Come, father, come with your son, an' you shall be

cured in half the time it takes to run a loop on a lariat.'

"Johnny breaks open one of the axle grease boxes, arms the savage with a chip for a spoon, an' exhorts him to cut in on it a whole lot.

"Son, the odors of them wares is awful; Kansas butter is violets to it; but it never flutters that Osage. He takes Johnny's chip an' goes to work, spadin' that axle grease into his mouth, like he ain't got a minute to live. When he's got away with half the box, he tucks the balance onder his blanket an' retires to his teepee with a look of gratitoode on his face. His heart has ceased to be bad, an' them illnesses, which aforetime has him on the go, surrenders to the powers of this yere new medicine like willows to the wind. With this, he goes caperin' out for his camp, idly hummin' a war song, sech is his relief.

"An' here's where Johnny gets action on that axle grease. It shorely teaches, also, the excellence of them maxims, 'Cast your bread upon the waters an' you'll be on velvet before many days.' Within two hours a couple of this sick buck's squaws comes sidlin' up to Johnny an' desires axle grease. It's quoted at four bits a box, an' the squaws changes in five pesos an' beats a retreat, carryin' away ten boxes. Then the fame of this big, new medicine spreads; that axle grease becomes plenty pop'lar. Other bucks an' other squaws shows up, changes in their money, an' is made happy with axle grease. They never has sech a time, them Osages don't, since the battle of the Hoss-shoe. Son, they packs it off

in blankets, freights it away in wagons. They turns loose on a reg'lar axle grease spree. In a week every box is sold, an' thar's orders stacked up on Florer's desk for two kyar-loads more, which is bein' hurried on from the East. Even the Injuns' agent gets wrought up about it, an' begins to bellow an' paw 'round by way of compliments to Johnny. He makes Johnny a speech.

"'Which I've made your excellent discovery, Mr. Florer,' says this agent, 'the basis of a report to the gov'ment at Washin'ton. I sets forth the mad passion of these yere Osages for axle grease as a condiment, a beverage, an' a cure. I explains the tribal leanin' that exists for that speshul axle grease which is crowned with years, an' owns a strength which comes only as the cor'lary of hard experience. Axle grease is like music an' sooths the savage breast. It is oil on the troubled waters of aboriginal existence. Its feet is the feet of peace. At the touch of axle grease the hostile abandons the war path an' surrenders himse'f. He washes off his paint an' becometh with axle grease as the lamb that bleateth. The greatest possible uprisin' could be quelled with a consignment of axle grease. Mr. Florer, I congratulate you. From a humble store-keep, sellin' soap, herrin' an' salt hoss, you takes your stand from now with the ph'lanthropists an' leaders among men. You have conjoined Injuns an' axle grease. For centuries the savage has been a problem which has defied gov'ment. He will do so no more. Mr. Florer, you have solved the savage with axle grease.'"

CHAPTER V.

Toothpick Johnson's Ostracism.

"YOU sees," observed the Old Cattleman, as he moved into the deeper shade; "you sees this yere Toothpick disgraces Wolfville; that's how it is. Downs a party, Toothpick Johnson does, an' no gun on the gent, the same bein' out of roole entire. Nacherally, while no one blames Toothpick, who makes the play what you-all calls 'bony fidis,' the public sort o' longs for his eelopement. An' that settles it; Toothpick has to hunt out for different stampin' grounds.

"It all comes from Toothpick bein' by nacher one of these yere over-zealous people, an' prematoorely prone that a-way. He's born eager, Toothpick is, an' can't he'p it none.

"You-all has tracked up on that breed of cimmaron plenty frequent now. They're the kind who picks up a poker hand, kyard by kyard, as they comes. They're that for'ard,—that headlong to get outen the present an' into the footure, they jest can't wait for things to have a chance to happen.

"'Whyever do you pull in your kyards that a-way?' I says to Toothpick, reprovin' of him. 'Why can't you let 'em lay till the hand's dealt?'

"'Which I'm shorely that locoed to look if I

ain't got three aces or some sech,' says Toothpick, 'I must turn 'em up to see.'

"'Well,' says I, an' the same is wisdom every time, 'you-all would appear more like a dead cold sport to let 'em be, an' pick up your whole hand together. Likewise, you'd display a mighty sight more savey if you keeps your eyes on the dealer till he lays down the deck. You'd be less afflicted by disagreeable surprises if you'd freeze to the last idee; an' you'd lay up money besides.'

"But that's the notion I'm aimin' to convey; Toothpick is too quick. His intellects, it looks like, is on eternal tip-toe to get in a stack.

"'He's too simooltaneous, is Toothpick,' says Jack Moore once, when him an' Boggs is discoursin' together, sizin' up Toothpick. 'He's that simooltaneous he comes mighty near bein' a whole lot too adjacent.'

"What does Toothpick do that time we-all disapproves an' stampedes him? It's a accidental killin'.

"It's second drink time in the evenin', an' the Tucson stage is in. Thar's a passel of us who has roped up our mail, an' now we're standin' 'round in front of the Red Light, breakin' into letters an' papers, an' a-makin' of comments, when along wanders a party who's been picnicin' with the camp. As the deal turns, he never does stay long nohow; never long enough to become a 'genial 'quaintance an' a fav'rite of all.'

"This party who comes sidlin' up is, as we hears,

late from Red Dog; an' doorin' them four hours wherein he confers his society onto us, he stays drunk habityooal an' never does lapse into bein' sober for a second. It's shore remark'ble, now, how all them Red Dog people stays intox'cated while they sojourns in Wolfville. Never knows it to fail; an' I allows, as a s'lootion that a-way, it's owin' to the sooperior merits of our nose-paint. It's a compliment they pays us.

"However, this Red Dog gent's drinkin' is his own affairs. An' his earnestness about licker may have been his system; then ag'in it may not; I don't go pryin' none to determine. But bein' he's plumb drunk, as you readily discerns, it keeps up a barrier ag'in growin' intimate with this party; an' ontil Toothpick opens on him, his intercourse with Wolfville is nacherally only formal.

"This visitor from Red Dog—which Red Dog itse'f is about as low-flung a bunch of crim'nals as ever gets rounded up an' called a camp—but, as I'm sayin', this totterin' wreck I mentions comes stragglin' up, more or less permiscus an' vague, an', without sayin' a word or makin' a sign, or even shakin' a bush, stands about lariat distance away an' star's at Toothpick, blinkin' his eyes mighty malevolent.

"It ain't no time when this yere bluff on the part of the drinkin' Red Dog gent attracts Toothpick, who's been skirmishin' 'round among us where we're standin', an' is at that time mentionin' Freighter's Stew, as a good thing to eat, to Dave Tutt.

"'Who be you-all admirin' now?' asks Toothpick of the Red Dog party, who's glarin' towards him. It's then I notes the lights begin to dance in Toothpick's eyes; with that impulsive sperit of his, he's doo to become abrupt with our visitor at the drop of the hat.

"That Red Dog gent don't make no retort, but stands thar with his eyes picketed on Toothpick like he's found a victim. Toothpick is fidgetin' on his feet, with his thumbs stuck in his belt; which this last is a bad symptom, as it leaves a gent's artillery easy to reach.

"It strikes me at the time that it's even money thar's goin' to be some shootin'. I don't then nor now know why none. But that ignorance is common about shootin's; two times in three nobody ever does know why.

"I reckons now it's Toothpick's fidgetin' makes me suspicious he's on the brink of rousin' the o'casion with his six-shooter. Which if he's cool an' ca'm, it would never come to me that a-way; a cool gent never pulls the first gun, leastways never when the pretext is friv'lous an' don't come onder the head of 'Must'.

"'Well,' says Toothpick ag'in, 'whatever be you-all gloatin' over, I asks? Or, mebby you're thinkin' of 'doptin' me as a son or somethin'?' says Toothpick.

"Still the party from Red Dog don't say nothin'. As Toothpick ceases, however, this Red Dog person makes a move, which is reasonable quick, for

his hip. He's got on a long coat, an' while no gent can see, thar's none of us has doubts but he is fully dressed, an' that he's searchin' out his Colt's.

"That's what Toothpick allows; an' the Red Dog party's hand ain't traveled two inches onder his surtoot, when Toothpick cuts free his '44, an' the Red Dog party hits the ground, face down, like a kyard jest dealt.

"Yes, he's dead enough; never does kick or flutter once. It's shorely a shot in the cross.

"'Do you-all note how he tries to fill his hand on me?' asks Toothpick, mighty cheerful.

"Toothpick stoops down for the Red Dog man's gun, an' what do you-all think? He don't have no weepon, none whatever; nothin' more vig'rous than a peaceful flask of whiskey, which the same is still all safe in his r'ar pocket.

"'He warn't heeled!' says Toothpick, straightenin' up an' lookin' at us apol'getic an' disgusted.

"It's jestice to Toothpick to say, I never yet overtakes that gent who's more abashed an' discouraged than he is when he finds this person ain't packin' no gun. He surveys the remainder a second, an' says:

"'Gents, if ever the licker for the camp is on Toothpick Johnson, it's now. But thar's one last dooty to perform touchin' deceased. It's evident, departed is about to ask me to drink. It's this yere motion he makes for his whiskey which I mistakes for a gun play. Thar I errs, an' stacks up this Red Dog person wrong. Now that I onderstands, while

acknowledgin' my fal'cies, the least I can do is to respect deceased's last wishes. I tharfore,' says Toothpick, raisin' the Red Dog party's flask, 'complies with what, if I hadn't interrupted him, would have been his last requests. An' regrettin' I don't savey sooner, I drinks to him.'

"No," concluded the Old Cattleman, "as I intimates at the go-off, Toothpick don't stay long after that. No one talks of stringin' him for what's a plain case of bad jedgment, an' nothin' more. But still, Wolfville takes a notion ag'in him, an' don't want him 'round none. So he has to freight out.

"'You are all right, Toothpick, speakin' gen'ral,' says Old Man Enright, when him an' Doc Peets an' Jack Moore comes up on Toothpick to notify him it's the Stranglers' idee he'd better pack his wagons an' hit the trail, 'but you don't hold your six-shooter enough in what Doc Peets yere calls "abeyance." Without puttin' no stain on your character, it's right to say you ain't sedentary enough, an' that you-all is a heap too soon besides. In view, tharfore, of what I states, an' of you droppin' this yere Red Dog gent—not an ounce of iron on him at the time!—while we exonerates, we decides without a dissentin' vote to sort o' look 'round the camp for you to-morry, say at sundown, an' hang you some, should you then be present yere. That's how the herd is grazin', Toothpick; an' if you're out to commit sooicide, you'll be partic'lar to be with us at the hour I names.'"

CHAPTER VI.

The Wolfville Daily Coyote.

"YOU-ALL remembers back," said the Old Cattleman, "that yeretofore I su'gests how at some appropriate epock, I relates about the comin' of Colonel William Greene Sterett an' that advent of Wolfville's great daily paper, the *Coyote*."

It was evening and sharply in the wake of dinner. We were gathered unto ourselves in my friend's apartments. In excellent mood to hear of Colonel Sterett and his celebrated journal, I eagerly assured him that his promise in said behalf was fresh and fragrant in my memory, and that I trusted he would find present opportunity for its redemption. Thus encouraged, the old gentleman shoved the box of cigars towards me, poured a generous glass, and disposed himself to begin.

"Red Dog in a sperit of vain competition," observed my friend, "starts a paper about the same time Colonel Sterett founds the *Coyote*; an', son, for a while, them imprints has a lurid life! The Red Dog paper don't last long though; it lacks them elements of longevity which the *Coyote* possesses, an' it ain't runnin' many weeks before it sort o' rots down all at once, an' the editor jumps the game.

"It's ever been a subject of dissensions between Colonel Sterett an' myse'f as to where impartial jestice should lay the blame of that Red Dog paper's failure. Colonel Sterett charges it onto the editor; but it's my beliefs, an' I'm j'ined tharin by Boggs an' Texas Thompson, that no editor could flourish an' no paper survive in surroundin's so plumb venomous an' p'isen as Red Dog. Moreover, I holds that Colonel Sterett, onintentional no doubt, takes a ja'ndiced view of that brother publisher. But I rides ahead of my tale.

"Thar comes a day when Old Man Enright heads into the Red Light, where we-all is discussin' of eepisodes, an' he packs a letter in his hand.

"'Yere's a matter,' he says, 'of public concern, an' I asks for a full expression of the camp for answer. Yere's a sharp by the name of Colonel William Greene Sterett, who writes me as how he's sufferin' to let go all holts in the States an' start a paper in Wolfville. It shall be, he says, a progressif an' enlightened journal, devoted to the moral, mental an' material upheaval of this yere commoonity, an' he aims to learn our views. Do I hear any remarks on this litteratoor's prop'sition?'

"'Tell him to come a-runnin', Enright,' says Jack Moore; 'an' draw it strong. If thar's one want which is slowly but shorely crowdin' Wolfville to the wall, it's a dearth of literatoor; yere's our chance, an' we plays it quick an high.'

"'I ain't so gala confident of all this,' says Dan Boggs. 'I'm sort o' allowin' this hamlet's too

feeble yet for a paper. Startin' a paper in a small camp this a-way is like givin' a six-shooter to a boy; most likely he shoots himse'f, or mebby busts the neighbor, tharwith.'

"'Oh, I don't know,' says Doc Peets, who, I wants to say, is as sudden a white man, mental, as I ever sees; 'my notion is to bring him along. The mere idee of a paper'll do a heap for the town.'

"'I'm entertainin' sentiments sim'lar,' says Enright; 'an' I guess I'll write this Colonel Sterett that we'll go him once if we lose. I'm assisted to this concloosion by hearin', the last time I'm in Tucson, that Red Dog, which is our rival, is out to start a paper, in which event it behooves Wolfville to split even with 'em at the least.'

"'That's whatever!' says Moore. 'If we allows Red Dog to put it onto us that a-way we might jest as well dissolve Wolfville as a camp, an' reepair to the woods in a body.'

"Enright sends Colonel Sterett word, an' in four weeks he comes packin' in his layout an' opens up his game. Colonel Sterett, personal, is a broad, thick, fine-seemin' gent, with a smooth, high for'ead, grey eyes, an' a long, honest face like a hoss. The Colonel has a far-off look in his eyes, like he's dreamin' of things sublime, which Doc Peets says is the common look of lit'rary gents that a-way. Texas Thompson, however, allows he witnesses the same distant expression in the eyes of a foogitive from jestice.

"Colonel Sterett makes a good impression. He

evolves his journal an' names it the *Coyote*, a name applauded by us all. I'll read you a few of them earliest items; which I'm able to give these yere notices exact, as I preserves a file of the *Coyote* complete. I shorely wouldn't be without it; none whatever!

"Miss Faro Nell, Wolfville's beautiful and accomplished society belle, condescended to grace the post of lookout last night for the game presided over by our eminent townsman, Mr. Cherokee Hall.

"'Ain't it sweet?' says Faro Nell, when she reads it. 'I thinks it's jest lovely. The drinks is on me, barkeep.' Then we goes on:

"Mr. Samuel Johnson Enright, a namesake of the great lexicographer, and the Lycurgus of Wolfville, paid a visit to Tucson last week.

"Any person possessing leisure and a stack of chips can adventure the latter under conditions absolutely equitable with that distinguished courtier of fortune, Mr. Cherokee Hall.

"If Mr. John Moore, our efficient Marshal, will refrain from pinning his targets for pistol practice to the exterior of our building, we will bow our gratitude when next we meet. The bullets go right through.

"We were distressed last week to note that Mr. James Hamilton, the gentlemanly and urbane proprietor of Wolfville's temple of terpsichoir (see ad. in another column) had changed whiskeys on us, and was dispensing what seemed to our throat a tincture of the common carpet tack of commerce. It is our hope that Mr. H., on seeing this, will at once restore the statu quo at his justly popular resort.

"A reckless Mexican was parading the street the other night carrying in his hand a monkey wrench. It was dark,

and Mr. Daniel Boggs, a leading citizen of Wolfville, who met him, mistaking the wrench for a pistol which the Mexican was carrying for some vile purpose, very properly shot him. Mexicans are far too careless this way.

"The O. K. Restauraw is one of the few superior hostelries of the Territory. Mrs. Rucker, its charming proprietress, is a cook who might outrival even that celebrated chef, now dead, M. Soyer. Her pies are poems, her bread an epic, and her beans a dream. Mrs. Rucker has cooked her way to every heart, and her famed establishment is justly regarded as the bright particular gem in Wolfville's municipal crown.

"It is not needed for us to remind our readers that Wolfville possesses in the person of that celebrated practitioner of medicine, Mr. Cadwallader Peets, M. D., a scientist whose fame is world-wide and whose renown has reached to furthest lands. Doctor Peets has beautifully mounted the skull of that horse-stealing ignobility, Bear Creek Stanton, who recently suffered the punishment due his many crimes at the hands of our local vigilance committee, a tribunal which under the discerning leadership of President Enright, never fails in the administration of justice. Doctor Peets will be glad to exhibit this memento mori to all who care to call. Doctor Peets, who is eminent as a phrenologist, avers that said skull is remarkable for its thickness, and that its conformation points to the possession by Bear Creek, while he wore it, of the most powerful natural inclinations to crime. From these discoveries of Doctor Peets, the committee which suspended this felon to the windmill is to be congratulated on acting just in time. It seems plain from the contour of this skull that it would not have been long, had not the committee intervened, before Bear Creek would have added murder to horse larceny, and to-day the town might be mourning the death of a valued citizen instead of felicitating itself over the taking-off of a villain whose very bumps indict and convict him with every fair and enlightened intelligence that is brought to their contemplation.

"Our respected friend and subscriber, Mr. David Tutt, and his beautiful and accomplished lady, Mrs. David Tutt, *nee* Tucson Jennie, have returned from their stay in Silver City. Last night in honor of their coming, and to see their friends, this amiable and popular pair gave an At Home. There was every form of refreshment, and joy and merriment was unconfined. Miss Faro Nell was admittedly the belle of this festive occasion, and Diana would have envied her as, radiant and happy, she led the grand march leaning on the arm of Mr. Cherokee Hall. By request of Mr. Daniel Boggs, the 'Lariat Polka' was added to the programme of dances, as was also the 'Pocatello Reel' at the instance of Mr. Texas Thompson. As the ball progressed, and at the particular desire of those present, Mr. Boggs and Mr. Thompson entertained the company with that difficult and intricate dance known as the 'Mountain Lion Mazourka,' accompanying their efforts with spirited vocalisms meant to imitate the defiant screams of a panther on its native hills. These cries, as well as the dance itself, were highly realistic, and Messrs. B. and T. were made the recipients of many compliments. Mr. and Mrs. Tutt are to be congratulated on the success of the function; to fully describe its many excellent features would exhaust encomium.

"Which we reads the foregoin' with onmixed pleasure, an' thar ain't a gent but who's plumb convinced that a newspaper, that a-way, is the bulwark of civilizations an' corner-stone of American institootions, which it's allowed to be by the voices of them ages.

"'This yere imprint, the *Coyote*,' says Jack Moore, 'is a howlin' triumph, an' any gent disposed can go an' make a swell bet on it with every certainty of a-killin'. Also, I remembers yereafter about them bullets.'

"Meanwhile, like I states prior, Red Dog has its editor, who whirls loose a paper which he calls the *Stingin' Lizard*. The Red Dog sheet ain't a marker to Colonel Sterett's *Coyote*, an' it's the yooniversal idee in Wolfville, after ca'mly comparin' the two papers, that Colonel Sterett as a editor can simply back that Red Dog person plumb off the ground.

"It ain't no time before Colonel Sterett an' the Red Dog editor takes to cirklin' for trouble, an' the frightful names they applies to each other in their respectif journals, an' the accoosations an' them epithets they hurls, would shore curdle the blood of a grizzly b'ar.

"An' as if to complicate the sityooation for that onhappy sport who's gettin' out the Red Dog *Stingin' Lizard*, he begins to have trouble local. Thar's a chuck-shop at Red Dog—it's a plumb low j'int; I never knows it to have any grub better than beans, salt pig an' airtights,—which is called the ABE LINCOLN HOUSE, an' is kept by a party named Pete Bland. Which this yere Bland also owns a goat, the same bein' a gift of a Mexican who's got in the hole to Bland an' squar's accounts that a-way.

"This goat is jest a simple-minded, every-day, common kind of a goat; but he's mighty thorough in his way, allers on the hustle, an' if he ever overlooks a play, no one don't know it. One day, when the Red Dog editor is printin' off his papers, up comes the goat, an' diskyardin' of the tin-can which he's chewin', he begins debauchin' of himse'f with

this yere edition of the *Stingin' Lizard.* It's mighty soon when the editor discovers it an' lays for the goat permiscus; he goes to chunkin' of him up a whole lot. The goat's game an' declar's himse'f, an' thar starts a altercation with the editor an' the goat, of which thar's no tellin' the wind-up, an' which ends only when this yere Bland cuts in, an' the goat's drug home. The paper is stopped an' the editor puts in this:

"Our presses are stopped to-day to say that if the weak-minded person who maintains the large, black goat which infests our streets, does not kill the beast, we will. To-day, while engaged in working off our mammoth edition out back of our building, the thievish creature approached unnoticed and consumed seventeen copies of the *Stinging Lizard.*

"Which this yere Bland gets incensed at this, an' puts it up the editor can't eat with him no more. But better counsel smooths it over, an' at last this Bland forgives the editor, an' all is forgot. The goat, however, never does; an' he stamps his foot an' prowls 'round for a fracas every time him an' that editor meets.

"All this yere time Colonel Sterett an' this same Red Dog editor maintains them hostilities. The way they lams loose at each other in their papers is a terror. I allers reckons Colonel Sterett gets a heap the best of this yere mane-chewin'; we-all so regyards it, an' so does he; an' he keeps his end up with great sperit an' voylence.

"These yere ink-riots don't go on more'n two months, however, when Colonel Sterett decides that

the o'casion calls for somethin' more explicit. As he says, 'Patience ceases to be trumps,' an' so he saddles up a whole lot an' rides over to Red Dog, personal. Colonel Sterett don't impart them plans of his to no one; he simply descends on his foe, sole an' alone, like that game an' chivalrous gent of bell letters which he shorely is; an', son, Colonel Sterett makes a example of that slander-mongerin' Red Dog editor.

"It's about the last drink time in the mornin', an' a passel of them Red Dog sports is convened in front of the Tub of Blood s'loon, when they-all hears a crash an' looks up, an' thar's their editor a-soarin' out of his second-story window. Of course, in a second or so, he hits the ground, an' them Red Dog folks goes over to get the rights of this yere phenomenon. He ain't hurt so but what he gets up an' limps 'round, an' he tells 'em it's the Wolfville editor does it. Next time the *Stingin' Lizard* comes out, we reads about it:

"The gasconading reptile who is responsible for the slimy life of that prurient sheet, the *Coyote*, paid us a sneaking visit Saturday. If he had given us notice of his intentions, we would have prepared ourselves and torn his leprous hide from his debauched and whiskey-poisoned frame, and polluted our fence with it, but he did not. True to his low, currish nature, he crept upon us unawares. Our back was toward him as he entered, perceiving which the cowardly poltroon seized us and threw us through our own window. Having accomplished his fiendish work, the miscreant left, justly fearing our wrath. The *Stinging Lizard's* exposure of this scoundrel as a drunkard, embezzler, wife-beater, jail-bird, thief, and general all-round

blackleg prompted this outrage. Never mind, the creature will hear from us.

"'Which this newspaper business is shorely gettin' some bilious, not to say hectic, a whole lot,' says Dan Boggs, as we reads this. 'I wonder if these yere folks means fight?'

"'Why,' says Enright, 'I don't know as they'd fight none if we-all lets 'em alone, but I don't see how we can. This sort of racket goes on for years in the East, but Wolfville can't stand it. Sech talk as this means blood in Arizona, an' we insists on them traditions that a-way bein' respected. Besides, we owes somethin' to Colonel Sterett.'

"So Enright an' Cherokee hunts up our editor an' asks him whatever he aims to do, an' tells him he's aroused public sentiments to sech heights thar'll be a pop'lar disapp'intment if he don't challenge the Red Dog editor an' beef him. Colonel Sterett allows he's crazy to do it, an' that the Wolfville public can gamble he'll go the distance. So Cherokee an' Jack Moore puts on their guns an' goes over to Red Dog to fix time an' place. The Red Dog editor says he's with 'em, an' they shakes dice for place, an' Cherokee an' Moore wins.

"'Which as evidence of good faith,' says Cherokee, 'we picks Red Dog. We pulls this thing off on the very scene of the vict'ry of Colonel Sterett when he hurls your editor through his window that time. I holds the same to be a mighty proper scheme.'

"'You-all needn't be timid none to come,' says

the Red Dog sports. 'You gets a squar' deal from a straight deck; you can gamble on that.'

"'Oh, we ain't apprehensif none,' says Cherokee an' Jack; 'you can shorely look for us.'

"Well, the day's come, an' all Wolfville an' Red Dog turns out to see the trouble. Jack Moore an' Cherokee Hall represents for our editor, an' a brace of Red Dog people shows down for the *Stingin' Lizard* man. To prevent accidents, Enright an' the Red Dog chief makes every gent but them I names, leave their weepons some'ers else, wherefore thar ain't a gun in what you-all might call the hands of the pop'laces.

"But thar comes a interruption. Jest as them dooelists gets placed, thar's a stoopendous commotion, an' chargin' through the crowd comes that abandoned goat. The presence of so many folks seems like it makes him onusual hostile. Without waitin' to catch his breath even, he lays for the Red Dog editor, who, seein' him comin', bangs away with his '45 an' misses. The goat hits that author in the tail of his coat, an' over he goes; but he keeps on slammin' away with the '45 jest the same.

"Which nacherally everybody scatters for cover at the first shot, 'cause the editor ain't carin' where he p'ints, an' in a second nobody's in sight but them two journalists an' that goat. I'll say right yere, son, Colonel Sterett an' his fellow editor an' the goat wages the awfullest battle which I ever beholds. Which you shorely oughter heard their expressions. Each of 'em lets go every load he's got, but the goat don't get hit onct.

"When we-all counts twelve shots—six apiece—we goes out an' subdoos the goat by the power of numbers. Of course, the dooel's ended. The Red Dog folks borries a wagon an' takes away their man, who's suffered a heap; an' Peets, he stays over thar an' fusses 'round all night savin' of him. The goat's all right an' goes back to the ABE LINCOLN HOUSE, where this yere Pete Bland is onreasonable enough to back that shockin' conduct of his'n.

"Which it's the last of the Red Dog *Stingin' Lizard.* That editor allows he won't stay, an' Bland, still adherin' to his goat, allows he won't feed him none if he does. The next issue of the *Stingin' Lizard* contains this:

"We bid adieu to Red Dog. We will hereafter publish a paper in Tucson; and if we have been weak and mendacious enough to speak in favor of a party of the name of Bland, who misconducts a low beanery which insults an honourable man by stealing his name—we refer to that feed-trough called the ABE LINCOLN HOUSE—we will correct ourselves in its columns. This person harbours a vile goat, for whose death we will pay $5, and give besides a life-long subscription to our new paper. Last week this mad animal made an unprovoked assault upon us and a professional brother, and beat, butted, wounded, bruised and ill-treated us until we suffer in our whole person. We give notice as we depart, that under no circumstances will we return until this goat is extinct.

"Followin' the onexpected an' thrillin' finish of Colonel Sterett's dooel with the Red Dog editor, an' from which Colonel Sterett emerges onscathed,

an' leavin' Peets with his new patient, we-all returns in a body to Wolfville. After refreshments in the Red Light, Enright gives his views.

"'Ondoubted,' observes Enright, 'our gent, Colonel Sterett, conducts himse'f in them painful scenes between him an' the goat an' that Red Dog editor in a manner to command respects, an' he returns with honors from them perils. Thar's no more to be done. The affair closes without a stain on the 'scutcheon of Wolfville, or the fair fame of Colonel Sterett; which last may continyoo to promulgate his valyooable paper, shore of our confidence an' upheld by our esteem. It is not incumbent on him to further pursoo this affair. His name an' honor is satisfied; besides, no gent can afford the recognitions and privileges of the dooello to a party who's sunk so low as to have hostile differences with a goat, an' who persists publicly in followin' 'em to bitter an voylent concloosions. This Red Dog editor's done put himse'f outside the pale of any high-sperited gent's consideration by them actions, an' can claim no further notice. Gents, in the name of Wolfville, I tenders congrat'lations to Colonel Sterett on the way in which he meets the dangers of his p'sition, an' the sooperb fashion in which he places before us one of the greatest journals of our times. Gents, we drinks to Colonel William Greene Sterett an' the *Coyote*.'"

CHAPTER VII.

Cherokee Hall Plays Poker.

"NACHERALLY I'm not much of a sport," remarked the Old Cattleman, as he laid down a paper which told a Monte Carlo story of a fortune lost and won. "Which I'm not remorseless enough to be a clean-strain gambler. Of course, a kyard sharp can make benevolences an' lavish dust on the needy on the side, but when it gets to a game for money, he can't afford no ruthfulness that a-way, tryin' not to hurt the sore people. He must play his system through, an' with no more conscience than cows, no matter who's run down in the stampede.

"For which causes, bein' plumb tender an' sympathetic, I'm shore no good with kyards; an' whenever I dallies tharwith, it is onder the head of amoosements.

"Do I regyard gamblin' as immoral? No; I don't reckon none now I do. This bein' what you-all church sharps calls moral is somewhat a matter of health, an' likewise the way you feels. Sick folks usual is a heap more moral than when their health's that excellent it's tantalizin'.

"Speakin' of morals, I recalls people who would scorn kyards, but who'd admire to buy a widow's

steers for four dollars an' saw 'em off ag'in for forty. They'd take four hundred dollars if some party, locoed to a degree which permits said outrage, would turn up. The right or wrong, what you calls the morality of gatherin' steers for four dollars an' plunderin' people with 'em at forty dollars, wouldn't bother 'em a bit. Which the question with these yere wolves is simply: 'How little can I pay an' how much can I get?' An' yet, as I says, sech parties mighty likely holds themse'fs moral to a degree which is mountainous, an' wouldn't take a twist at faro-bank, or pick up a poker hand, more'n they'd mingle with t'rant'lers an' stingin' lizards. An' some of them moral sports is so onlib'ral! I tells you, son, I've met up with 'em who's that stingy that if they owned a lake, they wouldn't give a duck a drink.

"'Gamblin' is immoral that a-way,' says these yere sports.

"An' yet I don't see no sech heinous difference between searchin' a gent for his roll with steers at forty dollars—the same standin' you in four—an' layin' for him by raisin' the ante for the limit before the draw. Mighty likely thar's a reason why one's moral an' the other's black an' bad, but I admits onblushin'ly that the onearthin' tharof is shore too many for dim-eyed folks like me. They strikes me a heap sim'lar; only the kyard sharp goes out ag'inst chances which the steer sharp escapes complete.

"I reckons Cherokee Hall an' me discusses how

wrong gamblin' is hundreds of times on leesure days; we frequent talks of it immoderate. Cherokee's views an' mine is side an' side, mostly, although, makin' his livin' turnin' kyards, of course he's more qualified to speak than me.

"'Which I shore finds nothin' wrong in faro-bank,' says Cherokee. 'Thar's times, however, when some sport who's locoed by bad luck, or thinks he's wronged, gets diffusive with his gun. At sech epocks this device has its burdens, I concedes. But I don't perceive no immorality; none whatever.'

"Yes, now you asks the question, I does inform you a while back of this Cherokee Hall bein' prone to charity. He never is much of a talker, but in his way he's a mighty gregar'ous gent. About some things he's game as hornets, Cherokee is; but his nerve fails him when it comes to seein' other people suffer. He can stand bad luck himse'f, an' never turn a ha'r; but no one else's bad luck.

"It ain't once a week, but it's every day, when this yere gray-eyed sport is robbin' his roll for somebody who's settin' in ag'inst disaster. Fact; Cherokee's a heap weak that a-way.

"Of course, turnin' faro, Cherokee knows who has money an' who needs it; keeps tab, so to speak, on the fluctooations of the camp's finances closer'n anybody. The riches an' the poverty of Wolfville is sort o' exposin' itse'f 'round onder his nose; it's a open book to him; an' the knowledge of who's flat, or who's flush, is thrust onto him continyoous.

As I says, bein' some sentimental about them hardships of others, the information costs Cherokee hard onto a diurnal stack or two.

"'Which you're too impulsive a whole lot,' I argues onct when a profligate he's staked, an' who reports himse'f as jumpin' sideways for grub previous, goes careerin' over to the dance hall with them alms he's wrung, an' proceeds on a debauch. 'You oughter not allow them ornery folks to do you. If you'd cultivate the habit of lettin' every gent go a-foot till he can buy a hoss, you'd clean up for a heap more at the end of the week. Now this ingrate whose hand you stiffens ain't buyin' nothin' but nose-paint tharwith.'

"'Which the same plants no regrets with me,' says Cherokee, all careless an' indifferent. 'If this person is sufferin' for whiskey worse'n he's sufferin' for bread, let him loose with the whiskey. The money's his. When I gives a gent a stake, thar's nothin' held back. I don't go playin' the despot as to how he blows it. If this yere party I relieves wants whiskey an' is buyin' whiskey, I approves his play. If I've a weakness at all, it's for seein' folks fetterless an' free.'

"While holdin' Cherokee's views erroneous, so far as he seeks to apply 'em to paupers tankin' up on donations, still I allows it's dealin' faro which has sp'iled him; an' as you can't make no gent over new, I quits an' don't buck his notions about dispensin' charity no more.

"Thar's times when this yere Cherokee Hall

caroms on a gent who's high-strung that a-way, an' won't take no donations; which this yere sport may be plenty needy to the p'int of perishin', too. That's straight; thar's nachers which is that reluctant about aid, they simply dies standin' before they'll ever ask.

"Once or twice when Cherokee crosses up with one of these yere sensitif souls, an' who's in distress, he never says a word about givin' him anythin'; he turns foxy an' caps him into a little poker. An' in the course of an hour—for he has to go slow an' cunnin', so he don't arouse the victim to suspicions that he's bein' played—Cherokee'll disarrange things so he loses a small stake to him. When he's got this distressed gent's finances reehabilitated some, he shoves out an' quits.

"'An' you can put it flat down,' remarks Cherokee, who's sooperstitious, 'I never loses nothin' nor quits behind on these yere benevolences. Which I oft observes that Providence comes back of my box before ever the week's out, an' makes good.'

"'I once knows a sport in Laredo,' says Texas Thompson, to whom Cherokee is talkin', 'an' is sort o' intimate with him. He's holdin' to somethin' like your system, too, an' plays it right along. Whenever luck's ag'in him to a p'int where he's lost half his roll, he breaks the last half in two an' gives one part to some charity racket. He tells me himse'f he's been addicted to this scheme so long it's got to be a appetite, an' that he never fails to win

himse'f outen the hole with what's left. You bet! I believes it; I sees this hold-up do it.'

"I ain't none shore thar ain't some bottom to them bluffs which Cherokee an' Texas puts up about Providence stockin' a deck your way, an' makin' good them gifts. At least, thar's times when it looks like it a heap. An' what I'll now relate shows it.

"One time Cherokee has it sunk deep in his bosom to he'p a gent named Ellis to somethin' like a yellow stack, so he can pull his freight for home. He's come spraddlin' into the West full of hope, an' allowin' he's goin' to get rich in a day. An' now when he finds how the West is swift an' hard to beat, he's homesick to death.

"But Ellis ain't got the *dinero.* Now Cherokee likes him—for Ellis is a mighty decent form of shorthorn—an' concloodes, all by himse'f, he'll stand in on Ellis' destinies an' fix 'em up a lot. Bein' as Ellis is a easy maverick to wound, Cherokee decides it's better to let him think he wins the stuff, an' not lacerate him by no gifts direct. Another thing, this yere Ellis tenderfoot is plumb contrary; he's shore contrary to the notch of bein' cap'ble of declinin' alms absoloote.

"To make certain Ellis is got rid of, an' headed homeward happy, Cherokee pulls on a little poker with Ellis; an' he takes in Dan Boggs on the play, makin' her three-handed, that a-way for a blind. Dan is informed of the objects of the meetin', an' ain't allowin' to more'n play a dummy hand tharin.

"This yere Ellis makes a tangle at first, wantin to play faro-bank; but Cherokee, who can't control no faro game like he can poker, says 'No;' he's dead weary of faro, turnin' it day an' dark; right then he is out for a little stretch at poker as mere relief. Also Dan objects strenyoous.

"'Which I don't have no luck at faro-bank,' says Dan. 'I does nothin' but lose for a month; I'm made sullen by it. The only bet I stands to win at faro, for plumb four weeks, is a hundred dollars which I puts on a case queen, coppered, over in Tucson the other day. An' I lose that. I'm a hoss-thief if, exackly as the queen is comin' my way, that locoed Tucson marshal don't take a slam at a gent with his six-shooter an' miss; an' the bullet, which is dodgin' an' meanderin' down the room, crosses the layout between the dealer an' me, an' takes the top chip off my bet. An' with it goes the copper. Before I can restore them conditions, the queen falls to lose; an' not havin' no copper on my bet, of course, I'm impoverished for that hundred as aforesaid. You knows the roole—every bet goes as it lays. Said statoote is fully in force in Tucson; an' declinin' to allow anythin' for wild shootin' by that fool marshal, them outcasts corrals my chips. "However do I know thar's an accident?" says the dealer, as he rakes in that queen bet, while I'm expoundin' why it should be comin' to me. "Mebby she's an accident, an' mebby ag'in that hom'cide who's bustin' 'round yere with his gun, is in league with you-all, an' shoots that copper off designful,

thinkin' the queen's comin' the other way. If accidents is allowed to control in faro-bank, the house would never win a chip." So,' concloodes Dan, ' they gets away with my hundred, invokin' strict rooles onto me. While I can't say they ain't right, I makes up my mind my luck's too rank for faro, an' registers vows not to put a peso on another layout for a year. As the time limit ain't up, I can't buck faro-bank none; but if you an' Ellis, Cherokee, can tol'rate a little draw, I'm your onmurmurin' dupe.'

"As I relates prior, the play is to let Ellis win a home-stake an' quit. At last they begins, Ellis seein' thar's no chance for faro-bank. Dan plays but little; usual, he merely picks up his kyards, cusses a lot, an' passes out. Now an' then, when it's his ante, or Cherokee stays out for the looks of the thing, Dan goes to the front an' sweetens Ellis for a handful of chips.

"Little by little, by layin' down good hands, breakin' pa'rs before a draw, an' gen'rally carryin' on tail-first an' scand'lous, Cherokee an' Dan is gettin' a few layers of fat on Ellis' ribs. But they has to lay low to do it. Oh! he'd kick over the table in a second if he even smells the play.

"Now yere's where Providence makes its deboo. It happens while these charities is proceedin', a avaricious gent—a stranger within our gates, he is —after regyardin' the game awhile, takes to deemin' it easy. The avaricious gent wants in; an' as Ellis, who's a heap elated at his luck an' is already talkin'

of the killin' he's makin', says 'Yes,' an' as Dan an' Cherokee can't say 'No' without bein' onp'lite, the avaricious gent butts in. It all disturbs Cherokee, who's a nervous sharp; an' when he sees how greedy the avaricious gent is for what he deems to be a shore thing, he concloodes to drop him plenty hard.

"It's four-hand poker now, an' the game wags on for a dozen hands. Dan is in hard luck; Cherokee on his part gets driven out each hand; an' Ellis an' the avaricious gent is doin' what little winnin's bein' done, between 'em. It's evident by this time, too, the avaricious gent's layin' for Cherokee. This oninstructed person looks on Cherokee as both imbecile an' onlucky to boot.

"The avaricious gent gets action suddener than he thinks. It's a jack pot. She goes by Ellis an' Dan; then Cherokee breaks her for the limit, two bloo chips, the par value whereof is ten dollars.

"'You breaks for ten?' says the avaricious gent, who's on Cherokee's left an' has the last say; 'well, I sees the break an' lifts it the limit.' An' the avaricious gent puts up four bloos. Ellis an' Dan, holdin' nothin' an' gettin' crafty, ducks.

"When the avaricious gent puts up his four bloo beans, Cherokee does somethin' no one ever sees him do before. He gets quer'lous an' complainin', an' begins to fuss a lot over his bad luck.

"'What did you-all come in for?' he says to the avaricious gent, as peevish as a sick infant. 'You sees me settin' yere in the muddiest of luck; can't you

a-bear to let me win a pot? You ain't got no hand to come in on neither, an' I'll bet on it. You jest nacherally stacks in, relyin' on bluffin' me, or outluckin' me on the draw. Well, you can't bluff; I'll see this yere through,' says Cherokee, puttin' up two more sky-colored beans an' actin' like he's gettin' heated, 'if it takes my last chip. As I do, however, jest to onmask you an' show my friends, as I says, that you ain't got a thing, I'll wager you two on the side, right now, that the pa'r of jacks I breaks on, is bigger than the hand on which you comes in an' makes that two-button tilt.' As he says this, Cherokee regyards the avaricious gent like he's plumb disgusted.

"It turns out, when Cherokee makes this yere long an' fretful break, the avaricious gent's holdin' a brace of kings. He's delighted with Cherokee's uproar, an' thinks how soft, an' what a case of openwork, he is.

"'You offers two bloos I can't beat a pa'r of jacks?' says the avaricious gent. Which he's plumb wolf, an' out for every drop of blood!

"'That's what I says,' replies Cherokee, some sullen.

"'I goes you,' says the avaricious gent, showin' a pa'r of kings.

"'Thar you be,' snarls Cherokee, with a howl like a sore-head dog, a-chuckin' the avaricious gent a couple of chips; 'thar you go ag'in! I can't beat nothin'; which I couldn't beat a drum!'

"The avaricious gent c'llects them two azure

bones; after which he diskyards three, drawin' to his two kings, an' sets back to win the main pot. He shore concloodes it's a red letter round-up for him.

"'I reckons now that I knows what you has,' says Cherokee, displayin' a ace in a foolish way, 'I upholds this yere ace on the side an' asks for two kyards.'

"The avaricious gent adds a third king to his list an' feels like sunny weather. Cherokee picks up his hand after the draw, an' the avaricious gent, who's viewin' him sharp, notes that he looks a heap morbid.

"All at once Cherokee braces up mighty savage, like he's ugly an' desp'rate about his bad luck.

"'If this yere limit was any size at all, a blooded gent might stand some show. Which I'd bluff you outen your moccasins if I wasn't reepressed by a limit whereof a child should be ashamed. I shore don't know how I mislays my se'f-respect to sech a pitch as to go settin' into these yere paltry plays.'

"'Which you see yere a lot!' says the avaricious gent, shakin' with delight, an' lookin' at them three crowned heads he holds; 'don't howl all night about a wrong what's so easy to rectify. We removes the limits, an' you can spread your pinions an' soar to any altitoode you please.'

"Cherokee looks at him hateful as a murderer; he seems like he's bein' goaded. Then, like he's made up his mind to die right yere, Cherokee turns in without no more words an' bets five hundred dollars.

It makes Ellis, who's new an' plumb poor that a-way, sort o' draw a long breath.

"'Which you'll climb some for this pot if you gets it,' says Cherokee, after his money's up; an' his tones is shore resentful.

"The avaricious gent thinks it's a bluff. He deems them three kings good. Cherokee most likely don't better by the draw. If he does, it's nothin' worse than aces up, or a triangle of jacks. That's the way this sordid sport lines up Cherokee's hand.

"'Merely to show you the error of your ways,' he remarks, 'an' to teach you to lead a happier an' a better life, I sees your five hundred an' raises her back the same.' An' the avaricious gent counts off a thousand dollars. 'Thar,' he says when it's up, 'now go as far as you like. Make it a ceilin' play if the sperit moves you.'

"'I sees it an' lifts her for five hundred more,' retorts Cherokee. An' he shoves his dust to the center.

"Cherokee's peevishness is gone, an' his fault-findin' is over. He's turned as confident an' easy as a old shoe.

"It strikes the avaricious gent as alarmin', this quick switch in the way Cherokee feels. It's cl'ar, as one looks in his face, that them trio of kings ain't no sech monstrosities as they was. He ain't half so shore they wins. After lookin' a while he says, an' his tones shows he's plumb doobious:

"'That last raise over-sizes me.'

"'That's it!' groans Cherokee, like his contempt for all mankind is comin' back. 'By the time I gets a decent hand every sport at the table's broke. What show do I have! However, I pinches down to meet your poverty. Put up what stuff you has.'

"The avaricious gent slowly gets up his last peso; he's out on a limb, an' he somehow begins to feel it. When the money's up, Cherokee throws down three aces an' a pa'r of nines, an' rakes the dust.

"'Next time,' says Cherokee, 'don't come fomentin' 'round poker games which is strangers to you complete. Moreover, don't let a gent talk you into fal'cies touchin' his hand. Which I'm the proud proprietor of them three aces when I breaks the pot. You-all lose this time; but if you'll only paste them dogmas I gives you in your sombrero, an' read 'em over from time to time, you'll notice they flows a profit. We three,' concloodes Cherokee, turnin' ag'in to Dan an' Ellis, 'will now resoome our wrong-doin' at the p'int where this yere former plootocrat interrupts. A benign Providence has fixed me plenty strong. Wherefore, if either of you sports should tap me for a handful of hundreds, them veins of mine will stand the drain. Dan, it's your deal.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

The Treachery of Curly Ben.

"YERE! you black boy, Tom!" and the Old Cattleman's voice rose loudly as he commanded the approach of that buoyant servitor, who supervised his master's destinies, and performed in the triangular role of valet, guardian and friend. "Yere, you; go to the barkeep of this tavern an' tell him to frame me up a pitcher of that peach brandy an' honey the way I shows him how. An' when he's got her organized, bring it out to us with two glasses by the fire. You-all ain't filin' no objections to a drink, be you?" This last was to me. "As for me, personal," he continued, "you can put down a bet I'm as dry as a covered bridge."

I readily assented to peach and honey. I would agree to raw whiskey if it were needed to appease him and permit me to remain in his graces.

"Thar's one thing, one redeemin' thing I might say, about the East," he went on, when the peach and honey appeared, "an' the same claims my respects entire; that's its nose-paint. Which we shorely suffers in the Southwest from beverages of the most ornery kind."

"There's a word I've wanted to ask you about more than once," I said. "What do you mean by 'ornery,' and where do you get it?"

"Where do I get it?" he responded, with a tinge of scorn. "Where do I rope onto any word? I jest nacherally reaches out an' acquires it a whole lot, like I do the rest of the language I employs. As for what it means, I would have allowed that any gent who escapes bein' as weak-minded as Thompson's colt—an' that cayouse is that imbecile he used to swim a river to get a drink—would hesitate with shame to ask sech questions.

"'Ornery' is a word the meanin' whereof is goin' to depend a heap on what you brands with it." This was said like an oracle. "Also, the same means more or less, accordin' to who-all puts the word in play. I remembers a mighty decent sort of sport, old Cape Willingham it is; an' yet Dan Boggs is forever referrin' to old Cape as 'ornery.' An' I reckon Dan thinks he is. Which the trouble with Cape, from Dan's standp'int, is this: Cape is one of these yere precise parties, acc'rate as to all he does, an' plenty partic'lar about his looks. An Osage buck, paintin' for a dance, wouldn't worry more over his feachers, an' the way the ocher should be streaked on.

"Now this yere Cape is shy an eye, where an Apache pokes it out with a lance, back in Cochise's time; an', as he regyards his countenance as seemin' over rocky, bein' redooced to one eye as I relates, he sends East an' gets a glass eye. This

ain't where Cape's technical'ties about his looks trails in, however; an', if he had paused thar in his reehabilitations, Boggs allers put it up he'd a-found no fault. But Cape notices that about tenth drink time his shore-enough eye begins for to show up bloodshot, an' is a bad mate for the glass eye, the same bein' onaffected by drink. So what does Cape do but have a bloodshot eye made, an' takes to packin' the same on his person constant. As Cape drinks his forty drops all commodious, he sort o' keeps tabs on himse'f in the lookin' glass back of the bar; an' when the good eye commences to turn red with them libations he's countin' into the corral, he ups an' shifts his bresh; digs out the white eye an' plants the drunken eye in the place.

"Shore! none of us cares except Dan Boggs; but Dan feels it to that extent, it's all Colonel Sterett an' Doc Peets an' Old Man Enright can do, added to Dan's bein' by nacher a born gent that a-way, to keep Dan from mentionin' it to old Cape.

"'A gent who comes from a good fam'ly, like you-all,' says Old Man Enright to Dan, sort o' soothin' of him, 'oughter be removed above makin' comments on pore old Cape shiftin' his optics. Troo! it's a weakness, but where is the sport who hasn't weaknesses likewise. Which you-all is a mighty sight to one side of bein' perfect yourse'f, Dan, an' yet we don't go 'round breakin' the information off in you every time you makes a queer play. An' you must b'ar with Cape, an' them caprices of his.'

"'I ain't denyin' nothin',' declar's Dan. 'I'm the last longhorn in Wolfville to be revilin' old Cape, an' refoosin' him his plain American right to go pirootin' 'round among his eyes as suits his taste. But I'm a mighty nervous man that a-way, an' Cape knows, or oughter know, how, as I states, I'm nacherally all onstrung, an' that his carryin's on with them eyes gives me the fantods. Onder all the circumstances, I claims his conduct is ornery, an' not what a invalid like me has a right to expect.'

"No; Dan never says nothin' to Cape; or does anythin' 'cept talk to Enright an' the rest of us about how he can't stand Cape shiftin' them eyes. An' it ain't affectation on the part of Dan; he shorely feels them shifts. Many a time, when it's got to be red eye time with Cape, an' as the latter is scroop'lously makin' said transfers, have I beheld Dan arise in silent agony, an' go to bite hunks outen a pine shelf that is built on the Red Light wall.

"'Which that ornery Cape,' says Dan, as he picks the splinters from his mouth after sech exercises, 'would drive me as locoed as a coyote if I don't take refooge in some sech play like that.'

"But, as I su'gests about this term 'ornery;' it depends a lot on who uses it, an' what for. Now Dan never refers to old Cape except as 'ornery;' while Enright an' the rest of us sees nothin' from soda to hock in Cape, doorin' them few months he mingles with us, which merits sech obloquys.

"No; ornery is a word that means what it says an' is shore deescriptif. Coyotes is ornery, sheep is

ornery; an' them low-flung hoomans who herds sheep is ornery, speshul. Of course, the term has misapplications; as an extreme case, I've even heard ign'rant tenderfeet who alloodes to the whole West as 'ornery.' But them folks is too debased an' too darkened to demand comments."

"You are very loyal to the West," I remarked.

"Which I shorely oughter be," retorted the old gentleman. "The West has been some loyal to me. Troo! it stands to reason that a party fresh from the East, where the horns has been knocked offen everythin' for two or three hundred years, an' conditions gen'ral is as soft as a goose-ha'r pillow, is goin' to notice some turgid changes when he lands in Arizona. But a shorthorn, that a-way, should reserve his jedgment till he gets acquainted, or gets lynched, or otherwise experiences the West in its troo colors. While Arizona, for speciment, don't go up an' put her arms about the neck of every towerist that comes chargin' into camp, her failure to perform said rites arises rather from dignity than hauteur. Arizona don't put on dog; but she has her se'f-respectin' ways, an' stands a pat hand on towerists.

"If I was called on to lay out a system to guide a tenderfoot who is considerin' on makin' Arizona his home-camp, I'd advise him to make his deboo in that territory in a sperit of ca'm an' silent se'f-reliance. Sech a gent might reside in Wolfville, say three months. He might meet her citizens, buck her faro-banks, drink her nose-paint, shake a

hilarious hoof in her hurdy gurdies, ask for his letters, or change in whatever sums seems meet to him at the New York Store for shirts. Also, he might come buttin' along into the O. K. Restauraw three times a day with the balance of the band, an' Missis Rucker would shorely turn her grub-game for him, for the limit if he so pleased. But still, most likely every gent in camp would maintain doorin' his novitiate a decent distance with this yere stranger; they wouldn't onbuckle an' be drunk with him free an' social like, an' with the bridle off, like pards who has crossed the plains together an' seen extremes. All this, with a chill onto it, a tenderfoot would find himse'f ag'inst for the first few months in Wolfville.

"An' yet, my steer to him would be not to get discouraged. The camp's sizin' him up; that's all. If he perseveres, ca'm an' c'llected like I states, along the trail of his destiny, he'll shore come winner on the deal. At the end of three months, or mebby in onusual cases four months, jest as this yere maverick is goin' into the dance hall, or mebby the Red Light, some gent will chunk him one in the back with his shet fist an' say, 'How be you? You double-dealin', cattle-stealin', foogitive son of a murdererin' hoss-thief, how be you?'

"Now, right thar is whar this yere shorthorn wants to maintain his presence of mind. He don't want to go makin' no vain plays for his six-shooter, or indulge in no sour ranikaboo retorts. That gent likes him. With Wolfville social conditions, this

yere greetin' is what you sports who comes from the far No'th calls 'the beginnin' of the thaw.' The ice is breakin' up; an' if our candidate sets in his saddle steady an' with wisdom at this back-thumpin', name-callin' epock, an' don't take to millin' 'round for trouble, in two minutes him an' that gregar'ous gent who's accosted him is drinkin' an' fraternizin' together like two stage hold-ups in a strange camp. The West ain't ornery; she's simply reserved a whole lot.

"Mighty likely now," continued my friend, following a profound pause which was comfortably filled with peach and honey; "it's mighty likely now, comin' down to folks, that the most ornery party I ever knows is Curly Ben. This yere Ben is killed, final; downed by old Captain Moon. Thar's a strange circumstance attendin', as the papers say, the obliteration of this Curly Ben, an' it makes a heap of an impression on me at the time. It shows how the instinct to do things, that a gent is allers carryin' 'round in his mind, gets sort o' located in his nerves mebby, an' he'll do 'em without his intellects ridin' herd on the play—do 'em like Curly Ben does, after his light is out complete.

"This yere is what I'm trailin' up to: When Captain Moon fetches Curly Ben that time, Curly is playin' kyards. He's jest dealin', when, onbeknown to him, Moon comes Injunin' up from the r'ar surreptitious, an' drills Curly Ben through the head; an' the bullet bein' a '45 Colt's—for Moon ain't toyin' with Curly an' means business—goes

plumb through an' emerges from onder Curly Ben's off eye. For that matter, it breaks the arm of a party who's playin' opp'site to Curly, an' who is skinnin' his pasteboards at the time, thinkin' nothin' of war. Which the queer part is this: Curly, as I states—an' he never knows what hits him, an' is as dead as Santa Anna in a moment—is dealin' the kyards. He's got the deck in his hands. An yet, when the public picks Curly off the floor, he's pulled his two guns, an' has got one cocked. Now what do you-all deem of that for the workin' of a left-over impulse when a gent is dead?

"But, as I remarks yeretofore, Curly Ben is the most ornery person I ever overtakes, an' the feelin's of the camp is in nowise laid waste when Moon adds him to the list that time in the Red Light bar. It's this a-way:

"It's about a month before, when Captain Moon an' his nephy, with two 8-mule teams and four big three-an'-a-half Bain wagons, two lead an' two trail they be, comes freightin' out of Silver City with their eyes on Wolfville. It's the fourth night out, an' they're camped near a Injun agency. About midnight a half dozen of the bucks comes scoutin' 'round their camp, allowin' to a moral certainty they'll see what's loose an' little enough for 'em to pull. The aborigines makes the error of goin' up the wind from Moon's mules, which is grazin' about with hobbles on, an' them sagacious anamiles actooally has fits. It's a fact, if you want to see a mule go plumb into the air an' remain, jest let him get a

good, ample, onmistakable smell of a Injun! It simply onhinges his reason; he ain't no more responsible than a cimmaron sheep. No, it ain't that the savage is out to do anything oncommon to the mule; it's merely one of the mule's illoosions, as I've told you once before. Jest the same, if them Injuns is comin' to braid his tail an' braid it tight, that mule couldn't feel more frantic.

"When these yere faithful mules takes to surgin' about the scene on two feet, Moon's nephy grabs a Winchester an' pumps a load or so into the darkness for gen'ral results. An' he has a heap of luck. He shorely stops one of them Apaches in his lopin' up an' down the land for good an' all.

"In less than no time the whole tribe is down on Captain Moon an' his nephy, demandin' blood. Thar's plenty of some sorts of wisdom about a savage, an' these yere Apaches ain't runnin' right in on Moon an' his relatif neither. They was perfeckly familiar with the accoomulation of cartridges in a Winchester, an' tharfore goes about the stirrin' up of Moon an' that nephy plumb wary.

"Moon an' the boy goes in between the wagons, blazin' an' bangin' away at whatever moves or makes a noise; an' as they've been all through sech festivals before, they regyards their final chances to be as good as an even break, or better.

"While them Apaches is dodgin' about among the rocks, an' howlin' contempt, an' passin' resolootions of revenge touchin' the two Moons, the Injun agent comes troopin' along. He seeks to round-up

his savages an' herd 'em back to the agency. The Apaches, on their side, is demandin' the capture of the nephy Moon for sp'ilin' one of their young men.

"The agent is a prairie dog jest out from the East, an' don't know half as much about what's goin' on inside of a Apache as a horned toad. He comes down to the aige of hostil'ties, as you-all might call it, an' makes Moon an' his Winchester workin' nephy a speech. He addresses 'em a whole lot on the enormity of downin' Apaches who goes prowlin' about an' scarin' up your mules at midnight, in what this yere witless agent calls a 'motif of childish cur'osity;' an' he winds up the powwow with demandin' the surrender of the 'hom'cide.'

"'Surrender nothin'!' says Captain Moon. 'You tell your Injuns to line out for their camp; an' don't you yourse'f get too zealous neither an' come too clost, or as shore as I casts my first vote for Matty Van Buren, I'll plug you plumb center.'

"But the nephy, he thinks different. In spite of Captain Moon's protests, he gives himse'f up to the agent on the promise of protection.

"'You're gone, lad,' says Moon, when the nephy insists on yieldin'; 'you won't last as long as a pint of whiskey in a five-hand poker game.'

"But this yere young Moon is obdurate an' goes over an' gives himse'f to the agent, who puts it up he'll send him to Prescott to be tried in co't for beefin' the mule-thief Apache that a-way.

"Shore! it turns out jest as Captain Moon says.

Before they'd gone a half mile, them wards of the gov'ment, as I once hears a big chief from Washin'ton call 'em, takes the nephy from this yere fallacious agent an' by fourth drink time that mornin', or when it's been sun-up three hours, that nephy is nothin' but a mem'ry.

"How do they kill him? In a fashion which, from the coigne your Apache views things, does 'em proud. That nephy is immolated as follows: They ropes him out, wrist an' ankle, with four lariats; pegs him out like he's a hide they're goin' to dry. Thar's a big ant hill close at hand; it's with reference to this yere ant colony that the nephy is staked out. In three hours from the time them ants gets the word from the Apaches, they've done eat the nephy up, an' the last vestitch of him plumb disappears with the last ant, as the latter resoomes his labors onder the earth.

"Why, shore! these yere ants'll eat folks. They regyards sech reepasts as festivals, an' seasons of reelaxation from the sterner dooties of a ant. I recalls once how we loses Locoed Charlie, which demented party I b'lieve I mentions to you prior. This yere Charlie takes a day off from where he's workin'—at least he calls it labor—at the stage corrals, an' goes curvin' over to Red Dog. Charlie tanks up on the whiskey of that hamlet, compared to which the worst nose-paint ever sold in Wolfville is nectar. They palms off mebby it's a quart of this jooce on Charlie, an' then he p'ints out for Wolfville.

"That's the last of the pore drunkard. His pony is nickerin' about the corral gates, pleadin' with the mules inside to open 'em, in the mornin', but no sign or smoke of Locoed Charlie. An' he never does show up no more.

"If it's Enright or Cherokee Hall, or any valyooed citizen, thar would have issooed forth a war party, an' Red Dog would have been sacked an' burned but what the missin' gent would have been turned out. But it's different about Locoed Charlie. He hadn't that hold on the pop'lar heart; didn't fill sech a place in the gen'ral eye; an' so, barrin' a word or two of wonder, over their drinks at the Red Light, I don't reckon now the Wolfville folks disturbs themse'fs partic'lar about the camp bein' shy Charlie.

"It's the second day when a teamster, trackin' over from Red Dog, developes what's left of Locoed Charlie. He falls off his hoss, with that load of Red Dog whiskey, an' every notion or idee or sensation absolootely effaced. An' where Charlie loses is, he falls by a ant hill. Yes; they shorely takes Charlie in. Thar's nothin' left of him when the teamster locates the remainder, but his clothes, his spurs an' his 'natomy. The r'ar gyard of them ants has long since retired with the final fragments of Locoed Charlie.

"You-all might o' seen the story. Colonel Sterett writes it up in the *Coyote*, an' heads it, 'Hunger is a Terrible Thing.' This sot Charlie comin' to his death that a-way puts a awful scare over Hug-

gins an' Old Monte. It reforms 'em for more'n two hours. Huggins, who is allers frontin' up as one who possesses public sperit, tries to look plumb dignified about it, an' remarks to Dave Tutt in the New York Store as how he thinks we oughter throw in around an' build a monument to Locoed Charlie. Dave allows that, while he's with Huggins in them projecks, he wants to add a monument to the ants. The founders of the scheme sort o' splittin' at the go-in that a-way, it don't get no further, an' the monument to Locoed Charlie, as a enterprise, bogs down. But to continyoo on the trail of Captain Moon.

"Moon comes rumblin' into Wolfville, over-doo mebby it's two weeks, bringin' both teams. Tharupon he relates them outrages. Thar's but one thought; that agent has lived too long.

"'If he was the usual common form of felon,' says Enright, 'ondoubted—for it would be their dooty—the vig'lance committee local to them parts would string him up. But that ain't possible; this yere miscreant is a gov'ment official an' wears the gov'ment brand, an' even the Stranglers, of whatever commoonity, ain't strong enough, an' wouldn't be jestified in stackin' in ag'in the gov'ment. Captain Moon's only show is a feud. He oughter caper over an', as private as possible, arrogate to himse'f the skelp of this yere agent who abandons his relatif to them hostiles.'

"Wolfville listens to Captain Moon's hist'ry of his wrongs; but aside from them eloocidations of

Enright, no gent says much. Thar's some games where troo p'liteness consists in sayin' nothin' an' knowin' less. But the most careless hand in camp can see that Moon's aimin' at reprisals.

"This Curly Ben is trackin' about Wolfville at the time. Curly ain't what you-all would call a elevated character. He's a rustler of cattle, an' a smuggler of Mexican goods, an' Curly an' the Yoonited States marshals has had more turn-ups than one. But Curly is dead game; an' so far, he manages to either out-luck or out-shoot them magistrates; an', as I says, when Moon comes wanderin' in that time, mournin' for his nephy, Curly has been projectin' about camp for like it's a week.

"Moon sort o' roominates on the play, up an' down, for a day or so, makin' out a plan. He don't want to go back himse'f; the agent knows him, an' them Injuns knows him, an' it's even money, if he comes pokin' into their bailiwick, they'll tumble to his errant. In sech events, they're shore doo to corral him an' give them ants another holiday. It's the ant part that gives pore Captain Moon a chill.

"'I'll take a chance on a bowie knife,' says Moon to Dan Boggs,—Dan, bein' a sympathetic gent an' takin' nacherally to folks in trouble, has Moon's confidence from the jump; 'I'll take a chance on a bowie knife; an' as for a gun, I simply courts the resk. But them ants dazzles me—I lay down to ants, an' I looks on it as no disgrace to a gent to say so.'

"'Ants shorely do sound poignant,' admits Dan;

'speshully them big black an' red ants that has stingers like hornets an' pinchers like bugs. Sech insecks, armed to the teeth as they be, an' laid out to fight both ways from the middle, is likewise too many for me. I would refoose battle with 'em myse'f.'

"It ain't long before Captain Moon an' Curly Ben is seen confidin' an' conferrin' with one another, an' drinkin' by themse'fs; an' no one has to be told that Moon's makin' negotiations with Curly to ride over an' down the agent. The idee is pecooliarly grateful to Wolfville. It stands to win no matter how the kyards lay in the box. If Curly fetches the agent flutterin' from his limb, thar's one miscreant less in Arizona; if the agent gets the drop an' puts out Curly Ben, it comes forth jest the same. It's the camp's theery that, in all that entitles 'em to death, the case stands hoss an' hoss between the agent an' Curly Ben.

"'An' if they both gets downed, it's a whip-saw; we win both ways;' says Cherokee Hall, an' the rest of us files away our nose-paint in silent assent tharwith.

"It comes out later that Moon agrees to give Curly Ben fifteen hundred dollars an' a pony, if he'll go over an' kill off the agent. Curly Ben says the prop'sition is the pleasantest thing he hears since he leaves the Panhandle ten years before; an' so he accepts five hundred dollars an' the pony—the same bein' in the nacher of payments in advance—an' goes clatterin' off up the canyon one evenin'

on his mission of jestice. An' then we hears no more of Curly Ben for about a month. No one marvels none at this, however, as downin' any given gent is a prop'sition which in workin' out is likely to involve delays.

"One day, with onruffled brow an' an air all careless an' free, Curly Ben rides into Wolfville an' begins orderin' whiskey at the Red Light before he's hardly cl'ar of the saddle. Thar ain't nobody in camp, from Doc Peets to Missis Rucker, but what's eager to know the finish of Curly's expedition, but of course everybody hobbles his feelin's in them behalfs. It's Captain Moon's fooneral, an' he oughter have a first, oninterrupted say. Moon comes up to Curly Ben where Curly is cuttin' the alkali dust outen his throat at the Red Light bar.

"'Did you get him?' Moon asks after a few p'lite preeliminaries. 'Did you bring back his ha'r an' y'ears like we agrees?'

"'Have you-all got the other thousand ready,' says Curly Ben, 'in the event I do?'

"'Right yere in my war-bags,' says Moon, 'awaitin' to make good for your time an' talent an' trouble in revengin' my pore nephy's deemise by way of them insecks.' An' Moon slaps his pocket as locatin' the *dinero*.

"'Well, I don't get him,' says Curly Ben ca'mly, settin' his glass on the bar.

"Thar's a pause of mebby two minutes, doorin' which Moon looks cloudy, as though he don't like the way the kyards is comin'; Curly Ben, on his

part, is smilin' like what Huggins calls 'one of his songstresses' over in the Bird Cage Op'ry House. After a bit, Moon resoomes them investigations.

"'Don't I give you four stacks of reds an' a pony,' he says, 'to reepair to that murderer an' floor-manage his obsequies? An' don't I promise you eight stacks more when you reports with that outcast's y'ears an' ha'r, as showin' good faith?'

"'C'rrect; every word,' says Curly Ben, lightin' a seegyar an then leanin' his elbows on the bar, a heap onmoved.

"'Which I would admire to know, then,' says Moon, an' his eyes is gettin' little an' hard, 'why you-all don't made good them compacts.'

"'Well, I'll onfold the reasons an' make it as plain an' cl'ar an' convincin' as a spade flush,' says Curly Ben. 'When I gets to this yere victim of ours, I finds him to be a mighty profoose an' lavish form of sport. The moment I'm finished explainin' to him my mission, an' jest as I onlimbers my six-shooter to get him where he lives, he offers me five thousand dollars to come back yere an' kill you. Nacherally, after that, me an' this yere subject of our plot takes a few drinks, talks it over, an' yere I be.'

"'But what be you aimin' to do?' asks Moon.

"'What be you aimin' to do?' responds Curly Ben. As I states, he's shore the most ornery coyote!

"'I don't onderstand,' says Moon.

"'Why it's as obv'ous,' retorts Curly Ben, 'as the Fence Rail brand, an' that takes up the whole side

of a cow. The question now is, do you raise this yere gent? He raises you as I explains; now do you quit, or tilt him, say, a thousand better?'

"'An' suppose I don't?' says Moon, sort o' figgerin' for a moment or so. 'What do you reckon now would be your next move?'

"'Thar would be but one thing to do,' says Curly Ben mighty placid; 'I'd shorely take him. I would proceed with your destruction at once, an' return to this agent gent an' accept that five thousand dollar honorarium he offers.'

"Curly Ben is 'bad' plumb through, an' the sights, as they says in the picturesque language of the Southwest, has been filed from his guns for many years. Which this last is runnin' in Moon's head while he talks with his disgustin' emmissary. Moon ain't out to take chances on gettin' the worst of it. An' tharfore, Moon at once waxes cunnin' a whole lot.

"'I'm a pore man,' he says, 'but if it takes them teams of mine, to the last tire an' the last hoof, I've got to have this agent's ha'r an' y'ears. You camp around the Red Light awhile, Curly, till I go over to the New York Store an' see about more money. I'll be back while you're layin' out another drink.'

"Now it's not to the credit of Curly, as a crim'nal who puts thought into his labors, that he lets Captain Moon turn his flank the easy way he does. It displays Curly as lackin' a heap in mil'tary genius. I don't presoome to explain it; an' it's all so dead onnacheral at this juncture that the only

s'lootion I'm cap'ble of givin' it is that it's pree-destinated that a-way. Curly not only lets Moon walk off, which after he hangs up that bluff about takin' them terms of the agent's is mighty irreg'lar, but he's that obtoose he sits down to play kyards, while he's waitin', with his back to the door. Why! it's like sooicide!

"Moon goes out to his wagons an' gets, an' buckles on, his guns. Quick, crafty, brisk as a cat an' with no more noise, Moon comes walkin' into the Red Light door. He sees Curly where he sits at seven-up, with his back turned towards him.

"'One for jack!' says Curly, turnin' that fav'rite kyard. Moon sort o' drifts to his r'ar.

"'Bang!' says Moon's pistol, an' Curly falls for'ards onto the table, an' then onto the floor, the bullet plumb through his head, as I informs you.

"Curly Ben never has the shadow of a tip; he's out of the Red Light an' into the regions beyond, like snappin' your thumb an' finger. It's as sharp as the buck of a pony; he's Moon's meat in a minute.

"No; thar's nothin' for Wolfville to do. Moon's jestified. Which his play is the one trail out; for up to that p'int where Moon onhooks his guns, Curly ain't done nothin' to put him in reach of the Stranglers. Committees of vig'lance, that a-way, like shore-enough co'ts, can't prevent crime; they only punish it, an' up to where Moon gets decisive action, thar's no openin' by which the Stranglers could cut in on the deal. Yes, Enright convenes

his committee an' goes through the motions of tryin' Moon. They does this to preserve appearances, but of course they throws Moon loose. An' as thar's reasons, as any gent can see, why no one cares to have the story as it is, be made a subject of invidious gossip in Red Dog, an' other outfits envious of Wolfville, at Enright's suggestion, the Stranglers bases the acquittal of Moon on the fact that Curly Ben deloodes Moon's sister, back in the States, an' then deserts her. Moon cuts the trail of the base sedoocer in Wolfville, an' gathers him in accordin', an' as a brother preyed on by his sister's wrongs is shorely expected to do."

"But Curly Ben never did mislead Moon's sister, did he?" I asked, for the confident fashion wherewith my old friend reeled off the finding of Wolfville's vigilance committee, and the reasons, almost imposed on me.

"Which you can bet the limit," he observed fiercely, as he prepared to go into the hotel; "which you can go the limit open, son, Curly ain't none too good."

CHAPTER IX.

Colonel Sterett's Reminiscences.

"AN' who is Colonel William Greene Sterett, you asks?" repeated the Old Cattleman, with some indignant elevation of voice. "He's the founder of the *Coyote*, Wolfville's first newspaper; is as cultivated a gent that a-way as acquires his nose-paint at the Red Light's bar; an' comes of as good a Kaintucky fam'ly as ever distils its own whiskey or loses its money on a hoss. Son, I tells you this prior." This last reproachfully.

"No; Colonel Sterett ain't old none—not what you-all would call aged. When he comes weavin' into Wolfville that time, I reckons now Colonel Sterett is mighty likely about twenty-odd years younger than me, an' at that time I shows about fifty rings on my horns. As for eddication, he's shore a even break with Doc Peets; an' as I remarks frequent, I never calls the hand of that gent in Arizona who for a lib'ral enlightenment is bullsnakes to rattlesnakes with Peets.

"Speakin' about who Colonel Sterett is; he onfolds his pedigree in full one evenin' when we're all sort o' self-herded in the New York Store. Which his story is a proud one; an' I'm a jedge

because comin as I do from Tennessee myse'f, nacherally I saveys all about Kaintucky. Thar's three grades of folks in Kaintucky, the same bein' contingent entire on whereabouts them folks is camped. Thar's the Bloo Grass deestrict, the Pennyr'yal deestrict, an' the Purchase. The Bloo Grass folks is the 'ristocrats, while them low-flung trash from the Purchase is a heap plebeian. The Pennyr'yal outfit is kind o' hesitatin' 'round between a balk an' a break-down in between the other two, an' is part 'ristocratic that a-way an' part mud. As for Colonel Sterett, he's pure strain Bloo Grass, an' he shows it. I'll say this for the Colonel, an' it shorely knits me to him from the first, he could take a bigger drink of whiskey without sugar or water than ever I sees a gent take in my life.

"That time I alloods to, when Colonel Sterett vouchsafes them recollections, we-all is in the r'ar wareroom of the New York Store where the whiskey bar'ls be, samplin' some Valley Tan that's jest been freighted in. As she's new goods, that Valley Tan, an' as our troo views touchin' its merits is important to the camp, we're testin' the beverage plenty free an' copious. No expert gent can give opinions worth a white chip concernin' nose-paint short o' six drinks, an' we wasn't out to make no errors in our findin's about that Valley Tan. So, as I relates, we're all mebby some five drinks to the good, an' at last the talk, which has strayed over into the high grass an' is gettin' a whole lot too learned an' profound for most of the herd to

cut in on, settles down between Doc Peets an Colonel Sterett as bein' the only two sports able to protect their play tharin.

"'An' you can go as far as you like on it,' says the Colonel to Peets, 'I'm plumb wise an' full concernin' the transmigration of souls. I gives it my hearty beliefs. I can count a gent up the moment I looks at him ; also I knows exactly what he is before he's a hooman bein'.'

"'That "transmigration" that a-way,' whispers Dan Boggs to Cherokee Hall, 'ain't no fool of a word. I'll prance over an' pull it on Red Dog to-morry. Which it's shore doo to strike 'em dumb.'

"'Now yere's Hoppin' Harry,' goes on the Colonel p'intin' to a thin, black little felon with long ha'r like a pony, who's strayed over from Tucson; 'I gives it out cold, meanin' tharby no offence to our Tucson friend—I gives it out cold that Hoppin' Harry used to be a t'rant'ler. First,' continyoos the Colonel, stackin' Harry up mighty scientific with his optic jest showin' over his glass, 'first I allows he's a toad. Not a horned toad, which is a valyooed beast an' has a mission; but one of these yere ornery forms of toads which infests the East. This last reptile is vulgar. sluggish, a anamile of few if any virchoos ; while the horned toad, so called, come right down to cases, ain't no toad nohow. It's a false brand, an' he don't belong with the toad herd at all. The horned toad is a lizard—a broad kind o' lizard ; an' as for bein' sluggish, you let him have something on

his mind speshul, an' he'll shore go careerin' about plumb swift. Moreover, he don't hop, your horned toad don't, like them Eastern toads; he stands up on his toes an' paces—he's what we-all calls on the Ohio River back in my childhood's sunny hours, "a side-wheeler." Also, he's got a tail. An' as for sperit, let me tell you this:—I has a horned toad where I'm camped over by the Tres Hermanas, where I'm deer-huntin'. I wins that toad's love from the jump with hunks of bread an' salt hoss an' kindred del'cacies. He dotes on me. When time hangs heavy, I entertains myse'f with a dooel between Augustus—Augustus bein' the horned toad's name—, an' a empty sardine box for which he entertains resentments.

"'"Lay for him, Augustus!" I'd say, at the same instant battin' him in the nose with the box.

"'Of course, Augustus ain't got savey enough to realize I does it. He allows it's the box that a-way makin' malev'lent bluffs at him. An' say, pards, it would have made you proud of your country an' its starry flag to see Augustus arch himse'f for war on them o'casions.

"'Not that Augustus is malignant or evil disposed, nacheral. No, sir; I've yet to meet up with the toad who has his simple, even, gen'rous temper or lovin' heart; as trustful too, Augustus is, as the babe jest born. But like all noble nachers, Augustus is sensitive, an' he regyards them bats in the nose as insults. As I says, you-all should have seen him! He'd poise himse'f on his toes, erect the

horn on his nose, same as one of these yere rhinoceroses of holy writ, an' then the way Augustus hooks an' harasses that offensive sardine box about the camp is a lesson to folks.'

"'Where's this yere Augustus now?' asks Dan Boggs, who's got all wropped up in the Colonel's narratifs.

"'Petered,' says the Colonel, an' thar's feelin's in his tones; 'pore Augustus cashes in. He's followin' me about one mornin' watchin' me hook up —we was gettin' ready to move camp—an' all inadvertent I backs the wagon onto Augustus. The hind wheel goes squar' over him an' flattens Augustus out complete. He dies with his eyes fixed on me, an' his looks says as plain as language, "Cheer up, Colonel! This yere contreetemps don't change my affections, for I knows it's a misdeal." You-all can gamble I don't do nothin' more that day but mourn.'

"'Which I should shorely say so!' says Dan Boggs, an' his voice is shakin'; 'a-losin' of a gifted horned toad like Augustus! I'd a-howled like a wolf.'

"'But as I'm sayin',' resoomes the Colonel, after comfortin' himse'f with about four fingers; 'speakin' of the transmigration of souls, I goes off wrong about Hoppin' Harry that time. I takes it, he used to be one of these yere Eastern toads on account of his gait. But I'm erroneous. Harry, who is little an' spry an' full of p'isen that a-way, used to be a t'rant'ler. Any gent who'll take the trouble to

recall one of these hairy, hoppin' t'rant'ler spiders who jumps sideways at you, full of rage an' venom, is bound to be reminded partic'lar of Hoppin' Harry.'

"'What did you-all use to be yourse'f, Colonel?' asks Enright, who notices that Hoppin' Harry is beginnin' to bristle some, like he ain't pleased none with these yere revelations. 'What for a anamile was you before you're a hooman?'

"'I was a good-nachered hoss,' says the Colonel mighty confident an' prompt; 'I'm a good-nachered hoss in a country neighborhood, an' everybody rides me that wants to. However, I allows we better shift the subject some. If we-all talks about these yere insects an' reptiles a little longer, Huggins over thar—whose one weakness is he's too frank with an' puts too much confidence in his licker—will have another one of them attacks of second sight, which Peets cures him of that time, an' commence seein' a multitood of heinous visions.'

"'Of course,' says Enright, plumb p'lite, 'of course, Colonel, I can tell a whole lot about your fam'ly by jest lookin' at you; partic'lar where as at present you're about ten drinks ahead; still thar's nothin' gives me more pleasure than hearin'about the sire from the colt; an' if you won't receive it resentful, I'd ask you as to your folks back in Kaintuck.'

"'As you-all knows,' observes Colonel Sterett, 'I was foaled in Kaintucky; an' I must add, I never recalls that jestly cel'brated commonwealth with-

out a sigh. Its glories, sech as they was before the war, is fast departin' away. In my yooth, thar is nothin' but a nobility in Kaintucky; leastwise in the Bloo Grass country, whereof I'm a emanation. We bred hosses an' cattle, an' made whiskey an' played kyards, an' the black folks does the work. We descends into nothin' so low as labor in them halcyon days. Our social existence is made up of weddin's, infares an' visitin' 'round; an' life in the Bloo Grass is a pleasant round of chicken fixin's an' flour doin's from one Christmas to another.'

"'Sech deescriptions,' remarks Enright with emotion an' drawin' the back of his hand across his eyes, 'brings back my yearlin' days in good old Tennessee. We-all is a heap like you Kaintucks, down our way. We was a roode, exyooberant outfit; but manly an' sincere. It's trooly a region where men is men, as that sport common to our neck of timber known as "the first eye out for a quart of whiskey" testifies to ample. Thar's my old dad! I can see him yet,' an' yere Enright closes his eyes some ecstatic. 'He was a shore man. He stood a hundred-foot without a knot or limb; could wrastle or run or jump, an' was good to cut a 4-bit piece at one hundred yards, offhand, with his old 8-squar' rifle. He never shoots squirrels, my father don't; he *barks* 'em. An' for to see the skin cracked, or so much as a drop of blood on one of 'em, when he picks it up, would have mortified the old gent to death.'

"'Kaintucky to a hair,' assented the Colonel,

who listens to Enright plenty rapt that a-way. 'An' things is so Arcadian! If a gent has a hour off an' feels friendly an' like minglin' with his kind, all he does is sa'nter over an' ring the town bell. Nacherally, the commoonity lets go its grip an' comes troopin' up all spraddled out. It don't know if it's a fire, it don't know if it's a fight, it don't know if it's a birth, it don't know if it's a hoss race, it don't know if it's a drink; an' it don't care. The commoonity keeps itse'f framed up perpetyooal to enjoy any one of the five, an' tharfore at the said summons comes troopin', as I say.

"'My grandfather is the first Sterett who invades Kaintucky, an' my notion is that he comes curvin' in with Harrod, Kenton, Boone an' Simon Girty. No one knows wherever does he come from; an' no one's got the sand to ask, he's that dead haughty an' reserved. For myse'f, I'm not freighted to the gyards with details touchin' on my grandfather; he passes in his chips when mebby I'm ten years old, an' the only things about him I'm shore of as a child, is that he's the greatest man on earth an' owns all the land south of the Ohio river.

"'This yere grandfather I'm talkin' of,' contin-yoos the Colonel after ag'in refreshin' himse'f with some twenty drops, 'lives in a big house on a bluff over-lookin' the Ohio, an' calls his place "The Hill." Up across one of the big stone chimleys is carved "John Sterett," that a-way; which I mentions the same as goin' to show he ain't afeard none of bein' followed, an' that wherever he does

come p'intin' out from, thar's no reward offered for his return.'

"'I ain't so shore neither,' interjects Texas Thompson. 'He might have shifted the cut an' changed his name. Sech feats is frequent down 'round Laredo where I hails from, an' no questions asked.'

"'Up on the roof of his ranch,' goes on the Colonel, for he's so immersed in them mem'ries he don't hear Texas where he rings in his theeries, 'up on the roof my grandfather has a big bell, an' the rope is brought down an' fetched through a auger hole in the side of the house, so he can lay in bed if he feels like it, an' ring this yere tocsin of his while so minded. An' you can bet he shorely rings her! Many a time an' oft as a child about my mother's knees, the sound of that ringin' comes floatin' to us where my father has his house four miles further down the river. On sech o'casions I'd up an' ask:

"'"Whatever is this yere ringin'?"

"'"Hesh, my child!" my mother would say, smotherin' my mouth with her hand, her voice sinkin' to a whisper, for as the head of the House of Sterett, every one of the tribe is plumb scared of my grandfather an' mentions him with awe. "Hesh, my child," says my mother like I relates, "that's your grandfather ringin' his bell."

"'An' from calf-time to beef-time, from the first kyard out of the box down to the turn, no one ever knows why my grandfather does ring it, for he's

too onbendin' to tell of his own accord, an' as I states prior, no one on earth has got nerve an' force of character enough to ask him.

"'My own father, whose name is the same as mine, bein' Willyum Greene Sterett, is the oldest of my grandfather's chil'en. He's a stern, quiet gent, an' all us young-ones is wont to step high an' softly whenever he's pesterin' 'round. He respects nobody except my grandfather, fears nothin' but gettin' out of licker.

"'Like my grandfather up at "The Hill," my father devotes all his talents to raisin' runnin' hosses, an' the old farm would have been a heap lonesome if thar's fewer than three hundred head a nickerin' about the barns an' pastures. Shore! we has slaves too; we has niggers to a stand-still.

"'As I look r'arward to them days of my infancy, I brings to mind a staggerin' blow that neighborhood receives. A stern-wheeler sinks about two hundred yards off our landin' with one thousand bar'ls of whiskey on board. When the news of that whiskey comes flyin' inland, it ain't a case of indi-vidyooals nor neighborhoods, but whole counties comes stampedin' to the rescoo. It's no use; the boat bogs right down in the sand; in less than an hour her smoke stack is onder water. All we ever gets from the wrack is the bell, the same now adornin' a Presbyter'an church an' summonin' folks to them services. I tells you, gents, the thoughts of that Willow Run, an' we not able to save so much as a quart of it, puts a crimp in that commoonity

they ain't yet outlived. It 'most drives 'em crazy; they walks them banks for months a-wringin' their hands an' wishin' the impossible.'

"'Is any one drowned?' asks Faro Nell, who comes in, a moment before, an' as usual plants herse'f clost to Cherokee Hall. 'Is thar any women or children aboard?'

"'Nell,' says the Colonel, 'I apol'gizes for my ignorance, but I'm bound to confess I don't know. Thar's no one knows. The awful fact of them one thousand bar'ls of Willow Run perishin' before our very eyes, swallows up all else, an' minor details gets lost in the shuffle an' stays lost for all time. It's a turrible jolt to the general sens'bilities, an' any gent who'll go back thar yet an' look hard in the faces of them people, can see traces of that c'lamity.

"'As a child,' resoomes the Colonel, 'I'm romantic a whole lot. I'm carried away by music. My fav'rite airs is "Smith's March," an' "Cease Awhile Clarion; Clarion Wild an' Shrill." I either wants something with a sob in it like "Cease Awhile," or I desires War with all her horrors, same as a gent gets dished up to him in "Smith's March."

"'Also, I reads Scott's "Ivanhoe," an' longs to be a croosader, an' slay Paynims. I used to lie on the bank by the old Ohio, an' shet my eyes ag'in the brightness of the sky, an' figger on them setbacks we'd mete out to a Paynim if only we might tree one once in old Kaintucky. Which that Sara-

cen would have shorely become the basis of some ceremonies!

"'Most like I was about thirteen years old when the Confederacy declar's herse'f a nation, elects Jeff Davis President, an' fronts up for trouble. For myse'f I concedes now, though I sort o' smothers my feelin's on that p'int at the time, seein' we-all could look right over into the state of Ohio, said state bein' heatedly inimical to rebellion an' pawin' for trouble an' rappin' its horns ag'in the trees at the mere idee; for myse'f, I say, I now concedes that I was heart an' soul with the South in them onhappy ruptures. I breathed an' lived with but one ambition, which is to tear this devoted country in two in the middle an' leave the fragments that a-way, in opposite fields. My father, stern, ca'm, c'llected, don't share the voylence of my sentiments. He took the middle ag'in the ends for his. The attitoode of our state is that of nootrality, an' my father declar'd for nootrality likewise. My grandfather is dead at the time, so his example's lost to us; but my father, sort o' projectin' 'round for p'sition, decides it would be onfair in him to throw the weight of his valor to either side, so he stands a pat hand on that embroglio, declines kyards, an' as I states is nootral. Which I know he's nootral by one thing:

"'"Willyum," he'd say that a-way when he'd notice me organizin' to go down to the village; "Willyum," he'd say, "if anybody asks you what you be, an' speshul if any of them Yankees asks

you, you tell 'em that you're Union, but you remember you're secesh."

"'The Sterett fam'ly, ondoubted, is the smartest fam'ly in the South. My brother Jeff, who is five years older than me, gives proofs of this, partic'lar. It's Jeff who invents that enterprise in fishin', which for idleness, profit an' pastime, ain't never been equalled since the flood, called "Juggin' for Cats." It's Jeff, too, once when he ups an' jines the church, an' is tharafter preyed on with the fact that the church owes two hundred dollars, and that it looks like nobody cares a two-bit piece about it except jest him, who hires a merry-go-round—one of these yere contraptions with wooden hosses, an' a hewgag playin' toones in the center—from Cincinnati, sets her up on the Green in front of the church, makes the ante ten cents, an' pays off the church debt in two months with the revenoos tharof.

"'As I sits yere, a relatin' of them exploits,' an' Colonel Sterett tips the canteen for another hooker, 'as I sits yere, gents, all free an' sociable with what's, bar none, the finest body of gents that ever yanks a cork or drains a bottle, I've seen the nobility of Kaintucky—the Bloo Grass Vere-de-Veres—ride up on a blood hoss, hitch the critter to the fence, an' throw away a fortune buckin' Jeff's merry-go-round with them wooden steeds. It's as I says: that sanctooary is plumb out of debt an' on velvet—has a bank roll big enough to stopper a 2-gallon jug with—in eight weeks from the time Jeff onfurls his lay-out an' opens up his game.'

"Thar's one thing," suddenly observed my aged companion, as he eyed me narrowly, pausing in the interesting Colonel Sterett's relation concerning his family, and becoming doubly impressive with an uplifted fore-finger, "thar's one thing I desires you to fully grasp. As I reels off this yere chronicle, you-all is not to consider me as repeatin' the Colonel's words exact. I ain't gifted like the Colonel, an' my English ain't a marker to his. The Colonel carries the language quiled up an' hangin' at the saddle horn of his intelligence, like a cow puncher does his lariat. An' when he's got ready to rope an' throw a fact or two, you should oughter see him take her down an' go to work. Horn or neck or any foot you says; it's all one to the Colonel. Big or little loop, in the bresh or in the open, it's a cinch the Colonel fastens every time he throws his verbal rope. The fact he's after that a-way, is shore the Colonel's. Doc Peets informs me private that Colonel Sterett is the greatest artist, oral, of which his'try records the brand, an' you can go broke on Peets's knowin'. An' thar's other test'mony.

"'I don't lay down my hand,' says Texas Thompson, one time when him an' me is alone, 'to any gent between the Rio Grande an' the Oregon, on sizin' up a conversation. An' I'll impart to you, holdin' nothin' back, that the Colonel is shorely the limit. Merely to listen, is an embarrassment of good things, like openin' a five-hand jack-pot on a ace-full. He can even out-talk my former wife, the Colonel can, an' that esteemable lady packs the record as a

conversationist in Laredo for five years before I leaves. She's admittedly the shorest shot with her mouth on that range. Talkin' at a mark, or in action, all you has to do is give the lady the distance an' let her fix her sights once, an' she'll stand thar, without a rest, an' slam observation after observation into the bull's eye till you'll be abashed. An' yet, compared to the Colonel yere, that lady stutters!'

"But now to resoome," said my friend when he had sufficiently come to the rescue of Colonel Sterett and given him his proper place in my estimation; "we'll take up the thread of the Colonel's remarks where I leaves off.

"'My grandfather,' says the Colonel, 'is a gent of iron-bound habits. He has his rooles an' he never transgresses 'em. The first five days of the week, he limits himse'f to fifteen drinks per diem; Saturday he rides eight miles down to the village, casts aside restraints, an' goes the distance; Sunday he devotes to meditations.

"'Thar's times when I inclines to the notion that my grandfather possesses partic'lar aptitoodes for strong drink. This I'll say without no thoughts of boastin', he's the one lone gent whereof I has a knowledge, who can give a three-ring debauch onder one canvas in one evenin'. As I states, my grandfather, reg'lar every Saturday mornin', rides down to the Center, four miles below our house, an' begins to crook his elbow, keepin' no accounts an' permittin' no compunctions. This, if the old gent is feelin' fit an' likely, keeps up about six hours;

at which epock, my grandfather is beginnin' to feel like his laigs is a burden an' walkin' a lost art. That's where the pop'lace gets action. The onlookers, when they notes how my ancestor's laigs that a-way is attemptin' to assoome the soopreme direction of affairs, sort o' c'llects him an' puts him in the saddle. Settin' thar on his hoss, my grandfather is all right. His center of grav'ty is shifted an' located more to his advantage. I esteems it one of them evidences of a sooperior design in the yooniverse, an' a plain proof that things don't come by chance, that long after a gent can't walk none, he's plumb able to ride.

"'Once my grandfather is safe in his saddle, as I relates, he's due—him an' his hoss, this last bein' an onusual sagacious beast which he calls his "Saturday hoss"—to linger about the streets, an' collab'rate with the public for mebby five more drinks; followin' which last libations, he goes rackin' off for "The Hill."

"'Up at our house on Saturdays, my father allers throws a skirmish line of niggers across the road, with orders to capture my grandfather as he comes romancin' along. An' them faithful servitors never fails. They swarms down on my grandfather, searches him out of the saddle an' packs him exultin'ly an' lovin'ly into camp.

"'Once my grandfather is planted in a cha'r, with a couple of minions on each side to steady the deal, the others begins to line out to fetch reestoratifs. I'm too little to take a trick myse'f, an' I can remem-

ber how on them impressif occasions, I would stand an' look at him. I'd think to myse'f—I was mebby eight at the time,—"He's ondoubted the greatest man on earth, but my! how blurred he is!"

"'Which as I states yeretofore, the Sterett system is the patriarchal system, an' one an' all we yields deference to my grandfather as the onchallenged chief ot the tribe. To 'llustrate this: One day my father, who's been tryin' out a two-year-old on our little old quarter-mile track, starts for The Hill, takin' me an' a nigger jockey, an' a-leadin' of the said two-year-old racer along. Once we arrives at my grandfather's, my father leaves us-all standin' in the yard and reepairs into the house. The next minute him an' my grandfather comes out. They don't say nothin', but my grandfather goes all over the two-year-old with eyes an' hand for mighty likely ten minutes. At last he straightens up an' turns on my father with a face loaded to the muzzle with rage.

"'"Willyum Greene Sterett," he says, conferrin' on my parent his full name, the same bein' a heap ominous; "Willyum Greene Sterett, you've brought that thing to The Hill to beat my Golddust."

"'"Yes," says my father, mighty steady, "an' I'll go right out on your track now, father, an' let that black boy ride him, an' I'll gamble you-all a thousand dollars that thar two-year-old beats Golddust."

"'"Willyum Greene Sterett," says my grandfather, lookin' at my father an' beginnin' to bile, "I've put up with a heap from you. You was owdacious as a child, worthless as a yooth, an' a spendthrift as a young man grown; an' a score of times I've paid your debts as was my dooty as the head of the House of Sterett. But you reserves it for your forty-ninth year, an' when I'm in my seventy-ninth year, to perform your crownin' outrage. You've brought that thing to The Hill to beat my Golddust. Now let me tell you somethin', an' it'll be water on your wheel a whole lot, to give heed to that I says. You get onto your hoss, an' you get your child Willyum onto his hoss, an' you get that nigger boy onto his hoss, an' you get off this Hill. An' as you go, let me give you this warnin'. If you-all ever makes a moccasin track in the mud of my premises ag'in, I'll fill you full of buckshot."

"'An' as I says, to show the veneration in which my grandfather is held, thar's not another yeep out o' any of us. With my father in the lead, we files out for home; an' tharafter the eepisode is never mentioned.

"'An' now,' says Colonel Sterett, 'as we-all is about equipped to report joodiciously as to the merits of the speshul cask of Valley Tan we've been samplin', I'll bring my narratif to the closin' chapters in the life of this grand old man. Thar's this to be observed: The Sterett fam'ly is eminent for two things: it gets everything it needs; an' it never gets it till it needs it. Does it need a gun, or

a hoss, or a drink, the Sterett fam'ly proceeds with the round-up. It befalls that when my grandfather passes his eightieth year, he decides that he needs religion.

"'"It's about time," he says, "for me to begin layin' up a treasure above. I'm goin' on eighty-one an' my luck can't last forever."

"So my grandfather he sets up in bed an' he perooses them scriptures for four months. I tell you, gents, he shorely searches that holy book a whole lot. An' then he puts it up he'll be baptized. Also, that he'll enter down into the water an' rise up out of the water like it's blazoned in them texts.

"'Seein' she's Janyooary at the time, with two foot of snow on the ground, it looks like my grandfather will have to postpone them rites. But he couldn't be bluffed. My grandfather reaches out of bed an' he rings that bell I tells you-all of, an' proceeds to convene his niggers. He commands 'em to cut down a big whitewood tree that lives down in the bottoms, hollow out the butt log for a trough, an' haul her up alongside the r'ar veranda.

"'For a week thar's a incessant "chip! chop!" of the axes; an' then with six yoke of steers, the trough is brought into camp. It's long enough an' wide enough an' deep enough to swim a colt.

"'The day for the baptizin' is set, an' the Sterett fam'ly comes trackin' in. Thar's two hundred of 'em, corral count. The whole outfit stands 'round while the water is heatin' for to dip the old gent. My father, who is the dep'ty chief an' next in com-

mand, is tyrannizin' about an' assoomin' to deal the game.

"'Thar's a big fire at which they're heatin' the rocks wherewith to raise the temperatoor of the water. The fire is onder the personal charge of a faithful old nigger named Ben. When one of them stones is red hot Ben takes two sticks for tongs an' drops it into the trough. Thar's a bile an' a buzz an' a geyser of steam, an' now an' then the rock explodes a lot an' sends the water spoutin' to the eaves. It's all plenty thrillin', you can bet!

"'My father, as I states, is pervadin' about, so clothed with dignity, bein' after my grandfather the next chicken on the roost, that you can't get near enough to him to borry a plug of tobacco. Once in a while he'd shasee up an' stick his hand in the water. It would be too hot, mebby.

"'"Yere, you Ben!" he'd roar. "What be you aimin' at? Do you-all want to kill the old man? Do you think you're scaldin' a hawg?"

"'Then this yere Ben would get conscience-stricken an' pour in a bar'l or two of cold water. In a minute my father would test it ag'in an' say:

"'"Ben, you shorely are failin' in your intellects. Yere this is as cold as ice; you'll give the old man a chill."

"'Final, however, the water is declar'd right, an' then out comes a brace of niggers, packin' my grandfather in a blanket, with the preacher preevailin' over all as offishul floor-manager of the festiv'ties. That's how it ends: my grandfather is baptized an'

gets religion in his eighty-first year, A. D.; an' two days later he sets in his chips, shoves his cha'r back an' goes shoutin' home.

"'"Be I certain of heaven?" he says to the preacher, when he's down to the turn. "Be I winner accordin' to your rooles an' tenets?"

"'"Your place is provided," says the preacher, that a-way.

"'"If it's as good a place as old Kaintucky, they shorely ain't goin' to have no fuss nor trouble with me; an' that's whatever!"'"

CHAPTER X.

How the Dumb Man Rode.

"NOW, I don't reckon none," remarked the Old Cattleman with a confidential air, "this yere 'dumb man' incident ever arises to my mind ag'in, if it ain't for a gent whose trail I cuts while I'm projectin' 'round the post-office for letters.

"It's this mornin', an' I'm gettin' letters, as I states, when I catches this old party sort o' beamin' on me frank an' free, like he's shore a friendly Injun. At last he sa'nters over an' remarks, 'Whatever is your callin', pard?' or some sech bluff as that.

"I sees he's good people fast enough; still I allows a small, brief jolt mebby does him good.

"'Well,' I says, intendin' to let him know I'm alive an' wakeful that a-way; 'well, whatever my callin' is, at least it ain't been no part of my bringin' up to let mere strangers stroll into the corral an' cinch a saddle onto me for a conversational canter, jest because they're disp'sitioned that a-way.'

"'No offence meant,' says the old party, an' I observes he grows red an' ashamed plumb up to his white ha'r.

"'Excuse me, *amigo*,' I says, handin' out my paw, which he seizes all radiant an' soon, 'I ain't intendin' nothin' blunt, nor to slam no door on better acquaintance, but when you-all ropes at me about what you refers to as my "callin'" that time, I ain't jest lookin' for a stranger to take sech interest in me, an' I'm startled into bein' onp'lite. I tharfore tenders regrets, an', startin' all over, states without reserve that I'm a cow man.

"'An' now,' I retorts, further, 'merely to play my hand out, an' not that I looks to take a trick at all, let me ask what pursoots do you p'int out on as a pretext for livin'?'

"'Me?' says the old party, stabbin' at his shirt bosom with his thumb; 'me? I'm a scientist.'

"'Which the news is exhilaratin' an' interestin',' I says; 'shake ag'in! If thar's one thing I regyards high, it's a scientist. Whatever partic'lar wagon-track do you-all follow off, may I ask?'

"It's then this old gent an' I la'nches into a gen'ral discussion onder the head of mes'laneous business, I reckons, an' he puts it up his long suit, as he calls it, is 'moral epidemics.' He says he's wrote one book onto 'em, an' sw'ars he'll write another if nobody heads him off; the same bein' onlikely. As he sees how I'm interested, the old sport sets down an' lays it out to me how sentiments goes in herds an' droves, same as weather an' things like that.

"'One day you rolls out in the mornin',' this old gent declar's, 'an' thar you reads how everybody

commits sooicide. Then some other day it's murder, then robbery, an' ag'in, the whole round-up goes to holdin' them church meetin's an' gettin' religion. Them's waves ; moral epidemics,' he says.

"Which this don't look so egreegious none as a statement, neither, an' so after pow-wowin' a lot, all complacent an' genial, I tells the old gent he's got a good game, an' I thinks myse'f his system has p'ints. At this, he admits he's flattered ; an' then, as we're gettin' to the ends of our lariats, we tips our sombreros to each other an' lets it go at that. To-morry he's goin' to confer on me his book ; which I means to read it, an' then I'll savey more about his little play.

"But," continued my friend, warm with his new philosophy, "this yere is all preelim'nary, an' brings me back to what I remarks at the jump ; that what that old gent urges recalls this dumb an' deef man incident ; which it sort o' backs his play. It's a time when a passel of us gets overcome by waves of sentiment that a-way, an' not only turns a hoss-thief loose entire, after the felon's done been run down, but Boggs waxes that sloppy he lavishes a hoss an' saddle onto him ; likewise sympathy, an' wishes him luck.

"The whole racket's that onnacheral I never does quit wonderin' about it ; but now this old science sharp expounds his theory of 'moral epidemics,' it gets cl'ared up in my mind, an' I reckons, as he says, it's shorely one of them waves.

"Tell the story ? Thar's nothin' much to said

yarn, only the onpreecedented leeniency wherewith we winds it up. In the first place, I don't know what this hoss-thief's name is, for he's plum deef an' dumb, an' ain't sayin' a word. I sees him hoverin' 'round, but I don't say nothin' to him. I observes him once or twice write things to folks he has to talk with on a piece of paper, but it's too slow a racket for me, too much like conversin' by freight that a-way, an' I declines to stand in on it. I don't like to write well enough to go openin' a correspondence with strangers who's deef an' dumb.

"When he first dawns on the camp, he has money, moderate at least, an' he gets in on poker, an' stud, an' other devices which is open an' common; an' gents who's with him at the time says he has a level notion of hands, an' in the long run, mebby, amasses a little wealth.

"While I ain't payin' much heed to him, I do hear towards the last of his stay as how he goes broke ag'inst faro-bank. But as gents often goes broke ag'inst faro-bank, an' as, in trooth, I tastes sech reverses once or twice myse'f, the information don't excite me none at the time, nor later on.

"It's mighty likely some little space since this dumb person hits camp, an' thar's an outfit of us ramblin' 'round in the Red Light, which, so to speak, is the Wolfville Club, an' killin' time by talkin'. Dave Tutt an' Texas Thompson is holdin' forth at each other on the efficacy of pray'r, an' the balance of us is bein' edified.

"It looks like Texas has been tellin' of a Mex-

ican he sees lynched at Laredo one time, an' how a tender gent rings in some orisons before ever they swings him off. Texas objects to them pray'rs an' brands 'em as hypocrisies. As happens frequent—for both is powerful debaters that a-way—Dave Tutt locks horns with Texas, an' they both prances 'round oratorical at each other mighty entertainin'.

"'Now you gents onderstand,' says Texas Thompson, 'I ain't sayin' a word about them pray'rs as mere supplications. I'm yere to state I regyards 'em as excellent, an' thar's gents at that time present who's experts in sech appeals an' who knows what prayin' is, who allows that for fervency, bottom an' speed, they shorely makes the record for what you might call off-hand pray'rs in Southern Texas. Thar ain't a preacher short of Waco or Dallas could have turned a smoother trick. But what I complains of is, it's onconsistent.'

"'However is prayin' that a-way onconsistent, I'd shorely like to know?' says Tutt, stackin' in ag'in Texas plenty scornful.

"'Why, this a-way,' says Texas. 'Yere's a gent who assembles with his peers to hang a Mexican. As a first flash outen the box, he puts up a strong pray'r talk to get this crim'nal by the heavenly gate. Now, whatever do you reckon a saint who knows his business is goin' to say to that? Yere stands this conceited Laredo party recommendin' for admission on high a Mexican he's he'pin' to lynch as not good enough for Texas. If them powers above ain't allowin' that prayin' party's

got his nerve with him, they ain't givin' the case the study which is shore its doo.'

"'Which I don't know!' says Tutt. 'I don't accept them views nohow. Prayin' is like goin' blind in poker. All you do is hope a whole lot. If the angels takes stock in your applications, well an' good. If they don't, you can gamble your spurs they're plenty able to protect themse'fs. All you can do is file them supplications. The angels lets 'em go or turns 'em down accordin'. Now, I holds that this Laredo sport who prays that time does right. Thar's nothin' like a showdown; an' his play, since he volunteers to ride herd on the Greaser's soul, is to do all he knows, an' win out if he can.'

"'That's whatever!' says Dan Boggs, who's listenin' full of interest, an' who allows he'll butt in on the talk. 'I j'ines with Tutt in this. My notion is, when it comes a gent's turn to pray, let him pray, an' not go pesterin' himse'f with vain surmises as to how it's goin' to strike them hosts on high. You can wager you ain't goin' to ride 'round Omnipotence none. You can draw up to the layout of life, an' from the cradle to the grave, you'll not pick up no sleepers on Providence that a-way. Now, once, when I'm over across the Mogallon Plateau, I—'

"But we never does hear what happens to Boggs that time over across the Mogallon Plateau; for when he's that far along, one of the niggers from the corral comes scurryin' up an' asks Texas

Thompson does he lend his pinto pony an hour back to the party who's deef an' dumb.

"'Which I shorely don't,' says Texas. 'You don't aim to tell me none he's done got away with my pinto hoss?'

"The nigger says he does. He announces that mebby an hour before, this party comes over to the corral, makes a motion or two with his hands, cinches the hull onto the pinto, an' lines out for the northeast on the Silver City trail. He's been plumb outen sight for more'n half an hour.

"'Which I likes that!' says Texas Thompson. 'For broad, open-air, noon-day hoss-stealin', I offers even money this dumb gent's enterprise is entitled to the red ticket.'

"Which we ain't standin' thar talkin' long. If thar's one reform to which the entire West devotes itse'f, it's breakin' people of this habit of hoss-stealin'. It ain't no time when four of us is off on the dumb party's trail, an' half of that is consoomed in takin' a drink.

"Whyever be gents in the West so sot ag'in hoss-thieves? Son, you abides in a region at once pop'lous an' fertile. But if you was to put in three months on a cactus desert, with water holes fifty miles apart, it would begin to glimmer on you as to what it means to find yourse'f afoot. It would come over you like a landslide that the party who steals your hoss would have improved your condition in life a heap if he'd played his hand out by shootin' a hole through your heart.

"No, I ain't in no sech hurry to hang people for standin' in on some killin'. Thar's two sides to a killin'; an' if deceased is framed up with a gun all reg'lar at the time, it goes a long way toward exculpatin' of the sport who outlives him. But thar ain't only one side to hoss-stealin', an' the sooner the party's strung up or plugged, the sooner thar's a vict'ry for the right.

"As I remarks, it ain't two minutes when thar's four of us gone swarmin' off after the dumb man who's got Texas Thompson's pinto pony. From the tracks, he ain't makin' no play to throw us off, for he maintains a straight-away run down the Silver City trail, an' never leaves it or doubles once.

"Runnin' of the dumb man down don't turn out no arduous task. It's doo mainly, however, because the pinto sticks a cactus thorn in its hoof an' goes lame in less time tharafter than it takes to turn a jack.

"'Hands up,' says Texas, gettin' the drop as we swings up on the deef an' dumb foogitive.

"But thar's no need of sech preecautions, as the dumb party ain't packin' no weepons—not so much as a knife.

"Thar's nothin' to say, no talk to make, when we takes him. Texas hefts him outen the saddle an' ropes his elbows behind with a lariat.

"'What do you-all su'gest, gents?' says Texas. 'I s'pose now the deecorous way is to go on with this yere aggressive an' energetic person to them piñon trees ahead, an' hang him some?'

"'Which thar's no doubts floatin' in anybody's mind on that subject,' says Dan Boggs, 'but I'd shore admire to know who this party is, an' where he's headin' to. I dislikes to stretch the neck of strangers that a-way; an' if thar's any gent, now, who can ask this yere person who he is, an' what he's got to say, I'd take it as a favor, personal, if he'd begin makin' of the needed motions.'

"But thar ain't none of us can institoote them gestures; an' when the dumb man, on his side, puts up a few bluffs with his fingers, it's a heap too complicated for us as a means of makin' statements.

"'I shore couldn't tell,' says Dave Tutt, as he sets watchin' the dumb man's play, 'whether he's callin' us names or askin' for whiskey.'

"'Which if we'd thought to bring some stationery,' says Texas, after we-all goes through our warbags in vain, 'we might open some successful negotiations with this person. As it is, however, we're plumb up ag'inst it, an' I reckon, Boggs, he'll have to hang without you an' him bein' formally introdooced.'

"'Jest the same, I wishes,' says Dave Tutt, 'that Doc Peets or Enright was along. They'd shore dig somethin' outen this citizen.'

"'Mebby he's got papers in his wamus,' says Boggs, 'which onfolds concernin' him. Go through him, Texas, anyhow.'

"All Texas can find on the dumb man is one letter; the postmark, when we comes to decipher the same, shows he only gets it that mornin'. Besides

this yere single missif that a-way, thar ain't a scrap of nothin' else to him ; nor yet no wealth.

"'Tell us what's in the letter,' says Texas, turnin' the document over to Boggs. 'Read her out, Dan; I'd play the hand, but I has to ride herd on the culprit.'

"'I can't read it,' says Boggs, handin' the note to Tutt; 'I can't read readin', let alone writin'. But I'm free to say, even without hearin' that document none, that I shorely hesitates to string this party up. Bein' tongueless, an' not hearin' a lick more'n adders, somehow he keeps appealin' to me like he's locoed.'

"'Which if you ever has the pleasure to play some poker with him,' says Tutt, as he onfolds the paper, 'like I do three nights ago, you wouldn't be annoyin' yourse'f about his bein' locoed. I finds him plenty deep an' wary, not to say plumb crafty. Another thing, it's plain he not only gets letters, but we-all sees him write about his drinks to Black Jack, the Red Light barkeep, an' sim'lar plays.'

"By this time, Tutt's got the letter open, an' is gettin' ready to read. The dumb man's been standin' thar all the time, with his arms roped behind him, an' lookin' like hope has died; an' also like he ain't carin' much about it neither. When Tutt turns open the letter, I notices the tears kind o' start in his eyes, same as if he's some affected sentimental.

"'Which this yere commoonication is plenty brief,' says Tutt, as he runs his eye over it. 'She's

dated "Casa Grande," an' reads as follows, to wit:

"'"Dear Ben: Myra is dyin'; come at once. A."

"'Now, whoever do you reckon this yere Myra is?' asks Tutt, lookin' 'round. 'She's cashin' in, that's obv'ous; an' I'm puttin' it up she's mighty likely a wife or somethin' of this yere dumb party.'

"'That's it,' says Boggs. 'He gets this word that Myra's goin' over the big divide, an' bein' he's gone broke entire on faro-bank, he plunges over to the corral an' rustles Thompson's hoss. Onder sech circumstances, I ain't none shore he's respons'ble. I takes it thar ain't much doubt but Myra's his wife that a-way, in which event my idee is he only borrys Thompson's pinto. Which nacherally, as I freely concedes, this last depends on Myra's bein' his wife.'

"'Oh, not necessarily,' says Texas Thompson; 'thar's a heap of wives who don't jestify hoss-stealin' a little bit. Now I plays it open, Myra's this dumb gent's mother, an' on sech a theery an' that alone, I removes the lariat from his arms an' throws him loose. But don't try to run no wife bluff on me; I've been through the wife question with a blazin' pine-knot in my hand, an' thar's nothin' worth while concealed tharin.'

"'Which I adopts the amendment,' says Boggs, 'an' on second thought, I strings my chips with Texas, that this yere Myra's his mother. I've got the money that says so.'

"'At any rate,' says Tutt, 'from all I sees, I

reckons it's the general notion that we calls this thing a draw. We can't afford to go makin' a precedent of hangin' a gent for hoss-stealin' who's only doin' his best to be present at this Myra's fooneral, whoever she may be. It's a heap disgustin', however, that we can't open up a talk with this party. Which I now notes by the address his name is McIntyre.'

"An' so it turns out that in no time, from four gents who's dead set to hang this dumb man as a hoss-thief, we turns into a sympathetic outfit which is diggin' holes for his escape. It all dovetails in with what my scientist says this mornin' about them 'moral epidemics,' an' things goin' that a-way in waves. For, after all, Myra or no Myra, this yere dumb man steals that pinto hoss.

"However, whether it's right or wrong, we turns the dumb man free. Not only that, but Boggs gets out of the saddle an' gives him his pony to pursoo them rambles with.

"'I gives it to him because it's the best pony in the outfit,' says Boggs, lookin' savage at us, as he puts the bridle in the dumb gent's hands. 'It can run like a antelope, that pony can; an' that's why I donates it to this dumb party. Once he's started, even if we-all changes our moods, he's shore an' safe away for good. Moreover, a gent whose mother's dyin', can't have too good a hoss. If he don't step on no more cactus, an' half rides, he's doo to go chargin' into Casa Grande before they loses Myra, easy.'"

CHAPTER XI.

How Prince Hal Got Help.

"Come yere, you boy Tom." It was the Old Cattleman addressing his black satellite. "Stampede up to them rooms of mine an' fetch me my hat; the one with the snakeskin band. My head ain't feelin' none too well, owin' to the barkeep of this hostelry changin' my drinks, an' that rattlesnake band oughter absorb them aches an' clar'fy my roominations a heap. Now, *vamos!*" he continued, as Tom seemed to hesitate, "the big Stetson with the snakeskin onto it.

"An' how be you stackin' up yours'ef?" observed the old gentleman, turning to me as his dark agent vanished in quest of head-gear. "Which you shorely looks as worn an' weary as a calf jest branded. It'll do you good to walk a lot; better come with me. I sort o' orig'nates the notion that I'll go swarmin' about permiscus this mornin' for a hour or so, an cirk'late my blood, an' you-all is welcome to attach yourse'f to the scheme. Thar's nothin' like exercise, that a-way, as Grief Mudlow allows when he urges his wife to take in washin'. You've done heard of Grief Mudlow, the laziest maverick in Tennessee?"

I gave my word that not so much as a rumor of the person Mudlow had reached me. My friend expressed surprise. It was now that the black boy Tom came up with the desired hat. Tom made his approach with a queer backward and forward shuffle, crooning to himself the while :

"Rain come wet me, sun come dry me,
Take keer, white man, don't come nigh me."

"Stop that double-shufflin' an' wing dancin'," remonstrated the old gentleman severely, as he took the hat and fixed it on his head. "I don't want no frivolities an' merry-makin's 'round me. Which you're always jumpin' an' dancin' like one of these yere snapjack bugs. I ain't aimin' at pompousness none, but thar's a sobriety goes with them years of mine which I proposes to maintain if I has to do it with a blacksnake whip. So you-all boy Tom, you look out a whole lot! I'm goin' to break you of them hurdy-gurdy tendencies, if I has to make you wear hobbles an' frale the duds off your back besides."

Tom smiled toothfully, yet in confident fashion, as one who knows his master and is not afraid.

"So you never hears of Grief Mudlow?" he continued, as we strolled abroad on our walk. "I reckons mebby you has, for they shore puts Grief into a book once, commemoratin' of his laziness. How lazy is he? Well, son, he could beat Mexicans an' let 'em deal. He's raised away off east, over among

the knobs of old Knox County, Grief is, an' he's that lazy he has to leave it on account of the hills.

"'She's too noomerous in them steeps an' deecliv'-ties,' says Grief. 'What I needs is a landscape where the prevailin' feacher is the hor'zontal. I was shorely born with a yearnin' for the level ground.' An' so Grief moves his camp down on the river bottoms, where thar ain't no hills.

"He's that mis'rable idle an' shiftless, this yere Grief is, that once he starts huntin' an' then decides he won't. Grief lays down by the aige of the branch, with his moccasins towards the water. It starts in to rain, an' the storm prounces down on Grief like a mink on a settin' hen. One of his pards sees him across the branch an' thinks he's asleep. So he shouts an' yells at him.

"'Whoopee, Grief!' he sings over to where Grief's layin' all quiled up same as a water-moccasin snake, an' the rain peltin' into him like etarnal wrath; 'wake up thar an' crawl for cover!'

"'I'm awake,' says Grief.

"'Well, why don't you get outen the rain?'

"'I'm all wet now an' the rain don't do no hurt,' says Grief.

"An' this yere lazy Grief Mudlow keeps on layin' thar. It ain't no time when the branch begins to raise; the water crawls up about Grief's feet. So his pard shouts at him some more:

"'Whoopee, you Grief ag'in!' he says. 'If you don't pull your freight, the branch'll get you. It's done riz over the stock of your rifle.'

"'Water won't hurt the wood none,' says Grief.

"'You Grief over thar!' roars the other after awhile; 'your feet an' laigs is half into the branch, an' the water's got up to the lock of your gun.'

"'Thar's no load in the gun,' says Grief, still a-layin', 'an' besides she needs washin' out. As for them feet an' laigs, I never catches cold.'

"An' thar that ornery Grief reposes, too plumb lazy to move, while the branch creeps up about him. It's crope up so high, final, that his y'ears an' the back of his head is in it. All Grief does is sort o' lift his chin an' lay squar', to keep his nose out so's he can breathe.

"An' he shorely beats the game; for the rain ceases, an' the branch don't rise no higher. This yere Grief lays thar ontil the branch runs down an' he's high an' dry ag'in, an' then the sun shines out an' dries his clothes. It's that same night when Grief has drug himse'f home to supper, he says to his wife, 'Thar's nothin' like exercise,' an' then counsels that lady over his corn pone an' chitlins to take in washin' like I relates."

We walked on in mute consideration of the extraordinary indolence of the worthless Mudlow. Our silence obtained for full ten minutes. Then I proposed "courage" as a subject, and put a question.

"Thar's fifty kinds of courage," responded my companion, "an' a gent who's plumb weak an' craven, that a-way, onder certain circumstances, is as full of sand as the bed of the Arkansaw onder

others. Thar's hoss-back courage an' thar's foot courage, thar's day courage an' night courage, thar's gun courage an' knife courage, an' no end of courages besides. An' then thar's the courage of vanity. More'n once, when I'm younger, I'm swept down by this last form of heroism, an' I even recalls how in a sperit of vainglory I rides a buffalo bull. I tells you, son, that while that frantic buffalo is squanderin' about the plains that time, an' me onto him, he feels a mighty sight like the ridge of all the yooniverse. How does it end? It's too long a tale to tell walkin' an' without reecooperatifs; suffice it that it ends disastrous. I shall never ride no buffalo ag'in, leastwise without a saddle, onless it's a speshul o'casion.

"No, indeed, that word 'courage' has to be defined new for each case. Thar's old Tom Harris over on the Canadian. I beholds Tom one time at Tascosa do the most b'ar-faced trick; one which most sports of common sens'bilities would have shrunk from. Thar's a warrant out for Tom, an' Jim East the sheriff puts his gun on Tom when Tom's lookin' t'other way.

"'See yere, Harris!' says East, that a-way.

"Tom wheels, an' is lookin' into the mouth of East's six-shooter not a yard off.

"'Put up your hands!' says East.

"But Tom don't. He looks over the gun into East's eye; an' he freezes him. Then slow an' delib'rate, an' glarin' like a mountain lion at East, Tom goes back after his Colt's an' pulls it. He lays

her alongside of East's with the muzzle p'intin' at East's eye. An' thar they stands.

"'You don't dar' shoot!' says Tom; an' East don't.

"They breaks away an' no powder burned; Tom stands East off.

"'Warrant or no warrant,' says Tom, 'all the sheriffs that ever jingles a spur in the Panhandle country, can't take me! Nor all the rangers neither!' An' they shore couldn't.

"Now this yere break-away of Tom's, when East gets the drop that time, takes courage. It ain't one gent in a thousand who could make that trip but Tom. An' yet this yere Tom is feared of a dark room.

"Take Injuns;—give 'em their doo, even if we ain't got room for them miscreants in our hearts. On his lines an' at his games, a Injun is as clean strain as they makes. He's got courage, an' can die without battin' an eye or waggin' a y'ear, once it's come his turn. An' the squaws is as cold a prop'sition as the bucks. After a fight with them savages, when you goes 'round to count up an' skin the game, you finds most as many squaws lyin' about, an' bullets through 'em, as you finds bucks.

"Courage is sometimes knowledge, sometimes ignorance; sometimes courage is desp'ration, an' then ag'in it's innocence.

"Once, about two miles off, when I'm on the Staked Plains, an' near the aige where thar's pieces of broken rock, I observes a Mexican on foot,

frantically chunkin' up somethin'. He's left his pony standin' off a little, an' has with him a mighty noisy form of some low kind of mongrel dog, this latter standin' in to worry whatever it is the Mexican's chunkin' at, that a-way. I rides over to investigate the war-jig; an' I'm a mesquite digger! if this yere transplanted Castillian ain't done up a full-grown wild cat! It's jest coughin' its last when I arrives. Son, I wouldn't have opened a game on that feline—the same bein' as big as a coyote, an' as thoroughly organized for trouble as a gatling—with anythin' more puny than a Winchester. An' yet that guileless Mexican lays him out with rocks, and regyards sech feats as trivial. An American, too, by merely growlin' towards this Mexican, would make him quit out like a jack rabbit.

"As I observes prior, courage is frequent the froots of what a gent don't know. Take grizzly b'ars. Back fifty years, when them squirrel rifles is preevalent; when a acorn shell holds a charge of powder, an' bullets runs as light an' little as sixty-four to the pound, why son! you-all could shoot up a grizzly till sundown an' hardly gain his disdain. It's a fluke if you downs one. That sport who can show a set of grizzly b'ar claws, them times, has fame. They're as good as a bank account, them claws be, an' entitles said party to credit in dance hall, bar room an' store, by merely slammin' 'em on the counter.

"At that time the grizzly b'ar has courage.

Whyever does he have it, you asks? Because you couldn't stop him; he's out of hoomanity's reach—a sort o' Alexander Selkirk of a b'ar, an' you couldn't win from him. In them epocks, the grizzly b'ar treats a gent contemptuous. He swats him, or he claws him, or he hugs him, or he crunches him, or he quits him accordin' to his moods, or the number of them engagements which is pressin' on him at the time. An' the last thing he considers is the feelin's of that partic'lar party he's dallyin' with. Now, however, all is changed. Thar's rifles, burnin' four inches of this yere fulminatin' powder, that can chuck a bullet through a foot of green oak. Wisely directed, they lets sunshine through a grizzly b'ar like he's a pane of glass. An', son, them b'ars is plumb onto the play.

"What's the finish? To-day you can't get clost enough to a grizzly to hand him a ripe peach. Let him glimpse or smell a white man, an' he goes scatterin' off across hill an' canyon like a quart of licker among forty men. They're shore apprehensife of them big bullets an' hard-hittin' guns, them b'ars is; an' they wouldn't listen to you, even if you talks nothin' but bee-tree an' gives a bond to keep the peace besides. Yes, sir; the day when the grizzly b'ar will stand without hitchin' has deeparted the calendar a whole lot. They no longer attempts insolent an' coarse familiar'ties with folks. Instead of regyardin' a rifle as a rotton cornstalk in disguise, they're as gun-shy as a female institoote. Big b'ars an' little b'ars, it's all sim'lar; for the old

ones tells it to the young, an' the lesson is spread throughout the entire nation of b'ars. An' yere's where you observes, enlightenment that a-way means a-weakenin' of grizzly-b'ar courage.

"What's that, son? You-all thinks my stories smell some tall! You expresses doubts about anamiles conversin' with one another? That's where you're ignorant. All anamiles talks; they commoonicates the news to one another like hoomans. When I've been freightin' from Dodge down towards the Canadian, I had a eight-mule team. As shore as we're walkin'—as shore as I'm pinin' for a drink, I've listened to them mules gossip by the hour as we swings along the trail. Lots of times I saveys what they says. Once I hears the off-leader tell his mate that the jockey stick is sawin' him onder the chin. I investigates an' finds the complaint troo an' relieves him. The nigh swing mule is a wit; an' all day long he'd be throwin' off remarks that keeps a ripple of laughter goin' up an' down the team. You-all finds trouble creditin' them statements. Fact, jest the same. I've laughed at the jokes of that swing mule myse'f; an' even Jerry, the off wheeler, who's a cynic that a-way, couldn't repress a smile. Shore! anamiles talks all the time; it's only that we-all hoomans ain't eddicated to onderstand.

"Speakin' of beasts talkin', let me impart to you of what passes before my eyes over on the Caliente. In the first place, I'll so far illoomine your mind as to tell you that cattle, same as people—an'

speshully mountain cattle, where the winds an snows don't get to drive 'em an' drift 'em south—lives all their lives in the same places, year after year; an' as you rides your ranges, you're allers meetin' up with the same old cattle in the same canyons. They never moves, once they selects a home.

"As I observes, I've got a camp on the Caliente. Thar's ten ponies in my bunch, as I'm saddlin' three a day an' coverin' a considerable deal of range in my ridin'. Seein' as I'm camped yere some six months, I makes the aquaintance of the cattle for over twenty miles 'round. Among others, thar's a giant bull in Long's Canyon—he's shorely as big as a log house. Him an' me is partic'lar friends, only I don't track up on him more frequent than onct a week, as he's miles from my camp. I almost forgets to say that with this yere Goliath bull is a milk-white steer, with long, slim horns an' a face which is the combined home of vain conceit an' utter witlessness. This milky an' semi-ediotic steer is a most abject admirer of the Goliath bull, an' they're allers together. As I states, this mountain of a bull an' his weak-minded follower lives in Long's Canyon.

"Thar's two more bulls, the same bein', as Colonel Sterett would say, also 'persons of this yere dramy.' One is a five-year-old who abides on the upper Red River; an' the other, who is only a three-year-old, hangs out on the Caliente in the vicinity of my camp.

"Which since I've got to talk of an' concernin' them anamiles, I might as well give 'em their proper names. They gets these last all reg'lar from a play-actor party who comes swarmin' into the hills while I'm thar to try the pine trees on his 'tooberclosis,' as he describes said malady, an' whose weakness is to saw off cognomens on everythin' he sees. As fast as he's introdooced to 'em, this actor sport names the Long's Canyon bull 'Falstaff'; the Red River five-year-old 'Hotspur,' bein' he's plumb b'lligerent an' allers makin' war medicine; while the little three-year-old, who inhabits about my camp in the Caliente, he addresses as 'Prince Hal.' The fool of a white steer that's worshippin' about 'Falstaff' gets named 'Pistol,' although thar's mighty little about the weak-kneed humbug to remind you of anythin' as vehement as a gun. Falstaff, Pistol, Hotspur an' Prince Hal; them's the titles this dramatist confers on said cattle.

"Which the West is a great place to dig out new appellations that a-way. Thar's a gentle-minded party comes soarin' down on Wolfville one evenin'. No, he don't own no real business to transact; he's out to have a heart-to-heart interview with the great Southwest, is the way he expounds the objects of his search.

"'An' he's plenty tender,' says Black Jack, who's barkeep at the Red Light. 'He comes pushin' along in yere this mornin'; an' what do you-all reckon now he wants. Asks for ice! Now what-

ever do you make of it! Ice in August, an' within forty miles of the Mexico line at that.' "Pard," I says, "we're on the confines of the tropics; an' while old Arizona is some queer, an' we digs for wood an' climbs for water, an' indulges in much that is morally an' physically the teetotal reverse of right-side-up-with-care, so far in our meanderin's we ain't oncovered no glaciers nor cut the trail of any ice. Which if you've brought snowshoes with you now, or been figgerin' on a Arizona sleighride, you're settin' in hard luck."'

"Jest as Black Jack gets that far in them statements, this yere tenderfoot shows in the door.

"'Be you a resident of Wolfville?' asks this shorthorn of Dave Tutt.

"'I'm one of the seven orig'nal wolves,' says Tutt.

"'Yere's my kyard,' says the shorthorn, an' he beams on Dave in a wide an' balmy way.

"'Archibald Willingham De Graffenreid Butt,' says Dave, readin' off the kyard. Then Dave goes up to the side, an' all solemn an' grave, pins the kyard to the board with his bowie-knife. 'Archibald Willingham De Graffenreid Butt,' an' Dave repeats the words plumb careful. 'That's your full an' c'rrect name, is it?'

"The shorthorn allows it is, an' surveys Dave in a woozy way like he ain't informed none of the meanin' of these yere manoovers.

"'Did you-all come through Tucson with this name?' asks Dave.

"He says he does.

"'An' wasn't nothin' said or done about it?' demands Dave; 'don't them Tucson sports take no action?'

"He says nothin' is done.

"'It's as I fears,' says Dave, shakin' his head a heap loogubrious, 'that Tucson outfit is morally goin' to waste. It's worse than careless; it's callous. That's whatever; that camp is callous. Was you aimin' to stay for long in Wolfville with this yere title?' asks Dave at last.

"The shorthorn mentions a week.

"'This yere Wolfville,' explains Dave, 'is too small for all that name. Archibald Willingham De Graffenreid Butt! It shorely sounds like a hoss in a dance hall. But it's too long for Wolfville, an' Wolfville even do her best. One end of that name is bound to protrood. Or else it gets all brunkled up like a long nigger in a short bed. However,' goes on Dave, as he notes the shorthorn lookin' a little dizzy, 'don't lose heart. We does the best we can. I likes your looks, an' shall come somewhat to your rescoo myse'f in your present troubles. Gents,' an' Dave turns to where Boggs an' Cherokee an' Texas Thompson is listenin', 'I moves you we suspends the rooles, an' re-names this excellent an' well-meanin' maverick, "Butcherknife Bill."'

"'I seconds the motion,' says Boggs. 'Butcherknife Bill is a neat an' compact name. I congratulates our visitin' friend from the East on the ease wherewith he wins it out. I would only make one

su'gestion, the same bein' in the nacher of amendments to the orig'nal resolootion, an' which is, that in all games of short kyards, or at sech times as we-all issues invitations to drink, or at any other epock when time should be saved an' quick action is desir'ble, said cognomen may legally be redooced to "Butch." '

"'Thar bein' no objections,' says Tutt, 'it is regyarded as the sense of the meetin' that this yere visitin' sharp from the States, yeretofore clogged in his flight by the name of Archibald Willingham De Graffenreid Butt, be yereafter known as "Butcher-knife Bill"; or failin' leesure for the full name, as "Butch," or both at the discretion of the co't, with the drinks on Butch as the gent now profitin' by this play. Barkeep, set up all your bottles an' c'llect from Butch.'

"But to go back to my long-ago camp on the Caliente. Prince Hal is a polished an' p'lite sort o' anamile. The second day after I pitches camp, Prince Hal shows up. He paws the grass, an' declar's himse'f, an' gives notice that while I'm plumb welcome, he wants it onderstood that he's party of the first part in that valley, an' aims to so continyoo. As I at once agrees to his claims, he is pacified; then he counts up the camp like he's sizin' up the plunder. It's at this point I signs Prince Hal as my friend for life by givin' him about a foot of bacon-skin. He stands an' chews on that bacon-skin for two hours; an' thar's heaven in his looks.

"It gets so Prince Hal puts in all his spar' time

at my camp. An' I donates flapjacks, bacon-skins an' food comforts yeretofore onknown to Prince Hal. He regyards that camp of mine as openin' a new era on the Caliente.

"When not otherwise engaged, Prince Hal stands in to curry my ponies with his tongue. The one he'd be workin' on would plant himse'f rigid, with y'ears drooped, eyes shet, an' tail a-quiverin'; an' you-all could see that Prince Hal, with his rough tongue, is jest burnin' up that bronco from foretop to fetlocks with the joy of them attentions. When Prince Hal has been speshul friendly, I'd pass him out a plug of Climax tobacco. Sick? Never once! It merely elevates Prince Hal's sperits in a mellow way, that tobacco does; makes him feel vivid an' gala a whole lot.

"Which we're all gettin' on as pleasant an' oneventful as a litter of pups over on the Caliente, when one mornin' across the divide from Red River comes this yere pugnacious person, Hotspur. He makes his advent r'arin' an' slidin' down the hillside into our valley, promulgatin' insults, an' stampin' for war. You can see it in Hotspur's eye; he's out to own the Caliente.

"Prince Hal is curryin' a pony when this yere invader comes crashin' down the sides of the divide. His eyes burn red, he evolves his warcry in a deep bass voice, an' goes curvin' out onto the level of the valley-bottom to meet the enemy. Gin'ral Jackson couldn't have displayed more promptitood.

"Thar ain't much action in one of them cattle battles. First, Hotspur an' Prince Hal stalks 'round, pawin' up a sod now an' then, an' sw'arin' a gale of oaths to themse'fs. It looks like Prince Hal could say the most bitter things, for at last Hotspur leaves off his pawin' an' profanity an' b'ars down on him. The two puts their fore'ards together an' goes in for a pushin' match.

"But this don't last. Hotspur is two years older, an' over-weighs Prince Hal about three hundred pounds. Prince Hal feels Hotspur out, an' sees that by the time the deal goes to the turn, he'll be shore loser. A plan comes into his mind. Prince Hal suddenly backs away, an' keeps on backin' ontil he's cl'ared himse'f from his foe by eighty feet. Hotspur stands watchin'; it's a new wrinkle in bull fights to him. He can tell that this yere Prince Hal ain't conquered none, both by the voylent remarks he makes as well as the plumb defiant way he wears his tail. So Hotspur stands an' ponders the play, guessin' at what's likely to break loose next.

"But the conduct of this yere Prince Hal gets more an' more mysterious. When he's a safe eighty feet away, he jumps in the air, cracks his heels together, hurls a frightful curse at Hotspur, an' turns an' walks off a heap rapid. Hotspur can't read them signs at all; an' to be frank, no more can I. Prince Hal never looks back; he surges straight ahead, climbs the hill on the other side, an' is lost in the oak bushes.

"Hotspur watches him out of sight, gets a drink in the Caliente, an' then climbs the hillside to where I'm camped, to decide about me. Of course, Hotspur an' I arrives at a treaty of peace by the bacon-rind route, an' things ag'in quiets down on the Caliente.

"It's next mornin' about fourth drink time, an' I'm overhaulin' a saddle an' makin' up some beliefs on several subjects of interest, when I observes Hotspur's face wearin' a onusual an' highly hang-dog expression. An' I can't see no cause. I sweeps the scenery with my eye, but I notes nothin'. An' yet it's as evident as a club flush that Hotspur's scared to a standstill. He ain't sayin' nothin', but that's because he thinks he'll save his breath to groan with when dyin'. It's a fact, son; I couldn't see nor hear a thing, an' yet that Hotspur bull stands thar fully aware, somehow, that thar's a warrant out for him.

"At last I'm made posted of impendin' events. Across the wide Caliente comes a faint but f'rocious war song. I glance over that a-way, an' thar through the oak bresh comes Prince Hal. An' although he's a mile off, he's p'intin' straight for this yere invader, Hotspur. At first I thinks Prince Hal's alone, an' I'm marvellin' whatever he reckons he's goin' to a'complish by this return. But jest then I gets a glimmer, far to Prince Hal's r'ar, of that reedic'lous Pistol, the milk-white steer.

"I beholds it all; Falstaff is comin'; only bein' a dark brown I can't yet pick him out o' the bresh.

Prince Hal has travelled over to Long's Canyon an' told the giant Falstaff how Hotspur jumps into the Caliente an' puts it all over him that a-way. Falstaff is lumberin' over—it's a journey of miles—to put this redundant Hotspur back on his reservation. Prince Hal, bein' warm, lively an' plumb zealous to recover his valley, is nacherally a quarter of a mile ahead of Falstaff.

"It's allers a question with me why this yere foolhardy Hotspur don't stampede out for safety. But he don't; he stands thar lookin' onusual limp, an' awaits his fate. Prince Hal don't rush up an' mingle with Hotspur; he's playin' a system an' he don't deviate tharfrom. He stands off about fifty yards, callin' Hotspur names, an' waitin' for Falstaff to arrive.

"An' thar's a by-play gets pulled off. This ranika-boo Pistol, who couldn't fight a little bit, an' who's caperin' along ten rods in the lead of Falstaff, gets the sudden crazy-hoss notion that he'll mete out punishment to Hotspur himse'f, an' make a reputation as a war-eagle with his pard an' patron, Falstaff. With that, Pistol curves his tail like a letter S, and, lowerin' his knittin'-needle horns, comes dancin' up to Hotspur. The bluff of this yere ignoble Pistol is too much. Hotspur r'ars loose an' charges him. This egregious Pistol gets crumpled up, an' Hotspur goes over him like a baggage wagon. The shock is sech that Pistol falls over a wash-bank; an' after swappin' end for end, lands twenty feet below with a groan an' a splash in the Caliente. Pistol is shorely

used up, an' crawls out on the flat ground below, as disconsolate a head o' cattle as ever tempts the echoes with his wails.

"But Hotspur has no space wherein to sing his vict'ry. Falstaff decends upon him like a fallin' tree. With one rushin' charge, an' a note like thunder, he simply distributes that Hotspur all over the range. Thar's only one blow; as soon as Hotspur can round up his fragments an' get to his hoofs, he goes sailin' down the valley, his eyes stickin' out so's he can see his sins. As he starts, Prince Hal, who's been hoppin' about the rim of the riot, claps his horns to Hotspur's flyin' hocks an' keeps him goin'. But it ain't needed none; that Falstaff actooally ruins Hotspur with the first charge.

"That night Falstaff, with the pore Pistol jest able to totter, stays with us, an' Prince Hal fusses an' bosses' 'round, sort o' directin' their entertainment. The next afternoon Falstaff gives a deep bellow or two, like he's extendin' '*adios*' to the entire Caliente canyon, an' then goes pirootin' off for home in Long's, with Pistol, who looks an' feels like a laughin' stock, limpin' at his heels. That's the end. Four days later, as I'm swingin' 'round the range, I finds Falstaff an' Pistol in Long's Canyon; Prince Hal is on the Caliente; while Hotspur—an' his air is both wise an' sad—is tamely where he belongs on the Upper Red. An' now recallin' how I comes to plunge into this yere idyl, I desires to ask you-all, however Prince Hal brings Falstaff to the wars that time, if cattle can't talk?"

CHAPTER XII.

How Wolfville Made a Jest.

"It's soon after that time I tells you of when Rainbow Sam dies off," and the Old Cattleman assumed the airs of a conversational Froude, "when the camp turns in an' has its little jest with the Signal Service sharp. You sees we're that depressed about Rainbow cashin' in, we needs reelaxation that a-way, so we-all nacheral enough diverts ourse'fs with this Signal party who comes bulgin' up all handy.

"Don't make no mistaken notions about Wolfville bein' a idle an' a dangerous camp. Which on the contrary, Wolfville is shorely the home of jestice, an' a squar' man gets a squar' game every time. Thar ain't no 'bad men' 'round Wolfville, public sentiment bein' obdurate on that p'int. Hard people, who has filed the sights offen their six-shooters or fans their guns in a fight, don't get tolerated, none whatever.

"Of course, thar's gents in Wolfville who has seen trouble an' seen it in the smoke. Cherokee Hall, for instance, so Doc Peets mentions to me private, one time an' another downs 'leven men.

"But Cherokee's by nacher kind o' warm an' ner-

vous, an' bein' he's behind a faro game, most likely he sees more o'casion; at any rate, it's common knowledge that whatever he's done is right.

"He don't beef them 'leven in Wolfville; all I recalls with us, is the man from Red Dog, the Stingin' Lizard, an' mebby a strayed Mexican or so. But each time Cherokee's hand is forced by these yere parties, an' he's exculpated in every gent's mind who is made awar' tharof.

"No; Cherokee don't rely allers on his gun neither. He's a hurryin' knife fighter for a gent with whom knives ain't nacher. Either way, however, gun or knife, Cherokee is a heap reliable; an' you can put down a bet that what he misses in the quadrille he'll shore make up in the waltz with all who asks him to a war dance. But speakin' of knives: Cherokee comes as quick an' straight with a bowie as a rattlesnake; an' not half the buzz about it.

"But jest the same, while thar's gents in camp like Cherokee, who has been ag'inst it more'n onct, an' who wins an' gets away, still Wolfville's as quiet an' sincere an outfit as any christian could ask.

"It's a fact; when Shotgun Dowling capers in an' allows he's about to abide with us a whole lot, he's notified to hunt another hole the first day.

"'So far from you-all livin' with us, Shotgun,' says Jack Moore, who's depooted to give Shotgun Dowling the run; 'so far from you bunkin' in yere for good, we ain't even aimin' to permit your visits. My notion is that you better pull your freight some

instant. Thar's a half-formed thought in the public bosom that if anybody sees your trail to-morry, all hands'll turn in an' arrange you for the grave.'

"'Never mind about arrangin' nothin',' says Shotgun; 'I quits you after the next drink; which libation I takes alone.' An' Shotgun rides away.

"What is the matter with Shotgun? Well, he's one of these yere murderin' folks, goin' about downin' Mexicans merely to see 'em kick, an' that sort of thing, an' all of which no se'f-respectin' outfit stands. He wins out his name 'Shotgun' them times when he's dep'ty marshal over at Prescott.

"'You must be partic'lar an' serve your warrant on a gent before you downs him,' says the Jedge, as he gives Shotgun some papers. 'First serve your warrant, an' then it's legal to kill him; but not without!'

"So Shotgun Dowling takes this yere warrant an' crams it down the muzzle of a shotgun an' hammers her out flat on top them buckshot.

"'Thar you be!' says Dowling. 'I reckons now the warrant gets to him ahead of the lead; which makes it on the level.'

"Tharupon Shotgun canters out an' busts his gent—warrant, lead an' all—an' that gives him the name of 'Shotgun' Dowling.

"But at the time he comes riotin' along into Wolfville, allowin' he'll reside some, he's regyarded hard; havin' been wolfin' 'round, copperin' Mexicans an' friskin' about general; so, nacheral, we warns him out as aforesaid. Which I, tharfore, ag'in

remarks, that Wolfville is a mighty proper an' peaceful place, an' its witticism with this yere Signal Service party needn't be inferred ag'inst it.

"This yere gent has been goin' about casooal, an' his air is a heap high-flown. He's been pesterin' an' irritatin' about the post-office for mighty like an hour, when all at once he crosses over to the Red Light an' squar's up to the bar. He don't invite none of us to licker—jest himse'f; which onp'liteness is shore received invidious.

"'Gimme a cocktail,' says this Signal person to the barkeep.

"As they ain't mixin' no drinks at the Red Light for man or beast, nor yet at Hamilton's hurdy-gurdy, this sport in yooniform don't get no cocktail.

"'Can't mix no drinks,' says Black Jack.

"'Can't mix no cocktail?' says the Signal sharp. 'Why! what a band of prairie dogs this yere hamlet is! What's the matter with you-all that you can't mix no cocktails? Don't you savey enough?'

"'Do we-all savey enough?' says Black Jack, some facetious that a-way. 'Stranger, we simply suffers with what we saveys. But thar's a law ag'in cocktails an' all mixin' of drinks. You sees, a Mexican female over in Tucson is one day mixin' drinks for a gent she's a-harborin' idees ag'in, an' she rings in the loco onto him, an' he goes plumb crazy. Then the Legislatoore arouses itse'f to its peril, that a-way, an' ups an' makes a law abatin' of mixed drinks. This yere bein' gospel trooth, you'll

have to drink straight whiskey; an' you might as well drink it outen a tin cup, too.'

"As he says this, Black Jack sets up a bottle an' a tin cup, an' then for a blazer slams a six-shooter on the bar at the same time. Lookin' some bloo tharat, the Signal sharp takes a gulp or two of straight nose-paint, cavilin' hot at the tin cup, an' don't mention nothin' more of cocktails.

"'Whatever is the damage anyhow?' he says to Black Jack, soon as he's quit gaggin' over the whiskey, the same tastin' raw an' vicious to him, an' him with his lady-like throat framed ready for cocktails. 'What's thar to pay?'

"'Nary *centouse*,' says Black Jack, moppin' of the bar complacent. 'Not a soo markee. That drink's on the house, stranger.'

"When this Signal sharp goes out, Enright says he's got pore manners, an' he marvels some he's still walkin' the earth.

"'However,' says Enright, 'I s'pose his livin' so long arises mainly from stayin' East, where they don't make no p'int on bein' p'lite, an' runs things looser.'

"'Whatever's the matter of chasin' this insultin' tenderfoot 'round a lot,' asks Texas Thompson, 'an' havin' amoosement with him? Thar ain't nothin' doin', an' we oughter not begretch a half-day's work, puttin' knowledge into this party. If somethin' ain't done forthwith to inform his mind as to them social dooties while he stays in Arizona, you can gamble he won't last to go East no more.'

"As what Texas Thompson says has weight, thar begins to grow a gen'ral desire to enlighten this yere sport. As Texas su'gests the idee, it follows that he goes for'ard to begin its execootion.

"'But be discreet, Texas,' says Enright, 'an' don't force no showdown with this Signal gent. Attainin' wisdom is one thing, an' bein' killed that a-way, is plumb different; an' while I sees no objection to swellin' the general fund of this young person's knowledge, I don't purpose that you-all's goin' to confer no diplomas, an' graduate him into the choir above none with a gun, at one an' the same time.'

"'None whatever,' says Texas Thompson; 'we merely toys with this tenderfoot an' never so much as breaks his crust, or brings a drop of blood, the slightest morsel. He's takin' life too lightly; an' all we p'ints out to do, is sober him an' teach him a thoughtful deecorum.'

"Texas Thompson goes a-weavin' up the street so as to cross the trail of this Signal party, who's headed down. As they passes, Texas turns as f'rocious as forty timber wolves, an' claps his hand on the shoulder of the Signal party.

"'How's this yere?' says Texas, shakin' back his long ha'r. An' he shorely looks hardened, that a-way.

"'How's what?' says the Signal man, who's astonished to death.

"'You saveys mighty well,' says Texas. 'You fails to bow to me, aimin' to insult an' put it all over

me in the presence of this yere multitood. Think of it, gents!' goes on Texas, beginnin' to froth, an' a-raisin' of his voice to a whoop; 'think of it, an' me the war-chief of the Panhandle, with forty-two skelps on my bridle, to be insulted an' disdained by a feeble shorthorn like this. It shore makes me wonder be I alive!

"'Stranger,' goes on Texas, turnin' to the Signal party, an' his hand drops on his gun, an' he breathes loud like a buffalo; 'nothin' but blood is goin' to do me now. If I was troo to myse'f at this moment, I'd take a knife an' shorely split you like a mackerel. But I restrains myse'f; also I don't notice no weepon onto you. Go, tharfore, an' heel yourse'f, for by next drink time the avenger 'll be huntin' on your trail. I gives you half an hour to live. Not on your account, 'cause it ain't comin' to you; but merely not to ketch no angels off their gyard, an' to allow 'em a chance to organize for your reception. Besides, I don't aim to spring no corpses on this camp. Pendin' hostil'ties, I shall rest myse'f in the Red Light, permittin' you the advantages of the dance hall, where Hamilton 'll lend you pen, ink, paper, an' monte table, wharby to concoct your last will. Stranger, *adios!*'

"By the time Texas gets off this talk an' starts for the Red Light, the Signal sport is lookin' some sallow an' perturbed. He's shorely alarmed.

"'See yere, pard,' says Dan Boggs, breakin' loose all at once, like he's so honest he can't restrain himse'f, an' jest as Texas heads out for the Red

Light; 'you're a heap onknown to me, but I takes a chance an' stands your friend. Now yere's what you do. You stiffen yourse'f up with a Colt's '44, an' lay for this Texas Thompson. He's a rustler an' a hoss-thief, an' a murderer who, as he says, has planted forty-two, not countin' Injuns, Mexicans an' mavericks. He oughter be massacred; an' as it's come your way, why prance in an' spill his blood. This camp'll justify an' applaud the play.'

"'But I can't fight none,' says the Signal party. 'It's ag'in the rooles an' reg'lations of the army.'

"'Which I don't see none how you're goin' to renig,' says Dave Tutt. 'This debauchee is doo to shoot you on sight. Them army rooles shorely should permit a gent to scout off to one side the strict trail a little; partic'lar when it's come down to savin' his own skelp.'

"One way an' another, Tutt an' Boggs makes it cl'ar as paint to the Signal party that thar's only two chances left in the box; either he downs Texas or Texas gets him. The Signal party says it's what he calls a 'dread alternatif.'

"'Which when I thinks of the gore this yere murderous Thompson already dabbles in,' says Boggs to the Signal party, 'I endorses them expressions. However, you put yourse'f in the hands of me an' Dave, an' we does our best. If you lives through it, the drinks is on you; an' if Texas beefs you—which, while deplorable, is none remote considerin' this yere Texas is a reg'lar engine of destruction—we sees that your remainder goes back to the States successful.'

"The Signal party says he's thankful he's found friends, an' tharupon they-all lines out for the dance hall, where they gets drinks, an' the Signal man, who's some pallid by now, figgers he'll write them letters an' sort o' straighten up his chips for the worst. Boggs observes that it's a good move, an' that Tutt an' he'll take an o'casional drink an' ride herd on his interests while he does.

"Tutt an' Boggs have got their brands onto mebby two drinks, when over comes Doc Peets, lookin' deadly dignified an' severe, an' says:

"'Who-all represents yere for this gent who's out for the blood of my friend, Texas Thompson?'

"'Talk to me an' Tutt,' says Boggs; 'an' cut her short, 'cause it's the opinion of our gent this rancorous Thompson infests the earth too long, an' he's hungerin' to begin his butchery.'

"'Which thar's enough said,' says Peets; 'I merely appears to notify you that in five minutes I parades my gent in front of the post-office, an' the atrocities can proceed. They fights with six-shooters; now what's the distance?'

"'Make it across a blanket,' says Tutt.

"'An' fold the blanket,' breaks in Boggs.

"'You can't make it too clost for my gent,' says Peets. 'As I starts to this yere conference, he says: "Doc, make her six-shooters an' over a handkerchief. I thirsts to shove the iron plumb ag'inst the heart that insults me, as I onhooks my weepon."'

"Of course, the poor Signal party, tryin' to write over by a monte table, an' spillin' ink all over

himse'f, listens to them remarks, an' it makes him feel partic'lar pensif.

"'In five minutes, then,' says Peets, 'you-all organize your gent an' come a-runnin'. I must canter over to see how Texas is holdin' himse'f. He's that fretful a minute back, he's t'arin' hunks outen a white-ash table with his teeth like it's ginger-cake, an' moanin' for blood. Old Monte's lookin' after him, but I better get back. Which he might in his frenzy, that a-way, come scatterin' loose any moment, an' go r'arin' about an' killin' your gent without orders. Sech a play would be onelegant an' no delicacy to it; an' I now returns to gyard ag'in it.'

"As soon as Peets is started for the Red Light, Tutt ag'in turns to the Signal party, who's settin' thar lookin' he'pless an' worried, like he's a prairie dog who's come back from visitin' some other dog, an' finds a rattlesnake's done pitched camp in the mouth of his hole.

"'Now then, stranger,' says Tutt, 'if you-all has a'complished that clerical work, me an' Dan will lead you to your meat. When you gets to shootin', aim low an' be shore an' see your victim every time you cuts her loose.'

"The Signal party takes it plumb gray an' haggard, but not seein' no other way, he gets up, an' after stampin' about a trifle nervous, allows, since it's the best he can do, he's ready.

"'Which it is spoke like a man,' says Boggs. 'So come along, an' we'll hunt out this annihilator

from Laredo an' make him think he's been caught in a cloudburst.'

"Old Monte has spread a doubled blanket in front of the post-office; an' as Tutt an' Boggs starts with their Signal party, thar's a yell like forty Apaches pours forth from across the street.

"'That's Thompson's war yelp,' says Boggs, explainin' of them clamors to the Signal party. 'Which it would seem from the fervor he puts into it, he's shorely all keyed up.'

"As Doc Peets comes out a-leadin' of Texas, it's noticed that Texas has got a tin cup.

"'Whatever's your gent a-packin' of that yootensil for?' demands Tutt, mighty truculent. 'Is this yere to be a combat with dippers?'

"'Oh, no!' says Peets, like he's tryin' to excuse somethin', 'but he insists on fetchin' it so hard, that at last to soothe him I gives my consent.'

"'Well, we challenges the dipper,' says Tutt. 'You-all will fight on the squar', or we removes our gent.'

"'Don't, don't!' shouts Texas, like he's agitated no limit; 'don't take him outen my sight no more. I only fetches the cup to drink his blood; but it's a small detail, which I shore relinquishes before ever I allows my heaven-sent prey the least loophole to escape.'

"When Peets goes up an' takes Texas's cup, the two debates together in a whisper, Texas lettin' on he's mighty hot an' furious. At last Peets says to him:

"'Which I tells you sech a proposal is irreg'lar; but since you insists, of course I names it. My gent yere,' goes on Peets to Boggs an' Tutt, 'wants to agree that the survivor's to be allowed to skelp his departed foe. Does the bluff go?'

"'It's what our gent's been urgin' from the jump,' says Boggs; 'an' tharfore we consents with glee. Round up that outlaw of yours now, an' let's get to shootin'.'

"I don't reckon I ever sees anybody who seems as fatigued as that Signal person when Boggs an' Tutt starts to lead him up to the blanket. His face looks like a cancelled postage-stamp. While they're standin' up their folks, Texas goes ragin' loose ag'in because it's a fight over a blanket an' not a handkerchief, as he demands.

"'What's the meanin' of a cold an' formal racket sech as this?' he howls, turnin' to Peets. 'I wants to go clost to my work; I wants to crowd in where it's warm.'

"'I proposes a handkerchief,' says Peets; 'but Tutt objects on the grounds that his man's got heart palp'tations or somethin'.'

"'You're a liar,' yells Tutt; 'our gent's heart's as solid as a sod house.'

"'What do I hear?' shouts Peets. 'You calls me a liar?'

"At this Tutt an' Peets lugs out their guns an' blazes away at each other six times like the roll of a drum—Texas all the time yellin' for a weepon, an' cavortin' about in the smoke that demoniac he'd

scare me, only I knows it's yoomerous. Of course Peets an' Tutt misses every shot, and at the wind-up, after glarin' at each other through the clouds, Peets says to Tutt:

"'This yere is mere petulance. Let's proceed with our dooties. As soon as Texas has killed an' skelped the hold-up you represents, I'll shoot it out with you, if it takes the autumn.'

"'That's good enough for a dog,' says Tutt, stickin' his gun back in the scabbard; 'an' now we proceeds with the orig'nal *baile*.'

"But they don't proceed none. As Tutt turns to his Signal sharp, who's all but locoed by the shootin', an' has to be detained by Boggs from runnin' away, Jack Moore comes chargin' up on his pony an' throws a gun on the whole outfit.

"'Hands up yere!' he says, sharp an' brief; 'or I provides the coyotes with meat for a month to come.'

"Everybody's hands goes up; an' it's plain Moore's comin' ain't no disapp'intment to the Signal person. He's that relieved he shows it.

"'Don't look so tickled,' growls Boggs to him, as Moore heads the round-up for the New York Store; 'don't look so light about it; you mortifies me.'

"Moore takes the band over to the New York Store, where Enright's settin' as a jedge. He allows he's goin' to put 'em all on trial for disturbin' of Wolfville's peace. The Signal sharp starts to say somethin', when Peets interrupts, an' that brings Boggs to the front, an' after that a gen'ral uproar breaks loose like a stampede.

"'Gimme a knife, somebody,' howls Texas, 'an' let me get in on this as I should. Am I to be robbed of my revenge like this?'

"But Enright jumps for a old Spencer seven-shooter, an' announces it cold, he's out to down the first gent that talks back to him a second time. This ca'ms 'em, an' the riot sort o' simmers.

"'Not that I objects to a street fight,' says Enright, discussin' of the case; 'but you-all talks too much. From the jabber as was goin' for'ard over that blanket out thar, it shorely reminds me more of a passel of old ladies at a quiltin' bee, than a convocation of discreet an' se'f-respectin' gents who's pullin' off a dooel. To cut her short, the public don't tolerate no sech rackets, an' yereupon I puts Texas Thompson an' this Signal party onder fifty-thousand-dollar bonds to keep the peace.'

"Texas is set loose, with Peets an' Cherokee Hall on his papers; but the Signal sharp, bein' strange in camp, can't put up no bonds.

"'Which as thar's no calaboose to put you into,' says Enright, when he's told by the Signal party that he can't make no bonds; 'an' as it's plumb ag'in the constitootion of Arizona to let you go, I shore sees no trail out but hangin'. I regrets them stern necessities which feeds a pore young man to the halter, but you sees yourse'f the Union must an' shall be preserved. Jack, go over to my pony an' fetch the rope. It's a new half-inch manilla, but I cheerfully parts with it in the cause of jestice.'

"When Moore gets back with the rope, an' every-

body's lookin' serious, that a-way, it shakes the Signal party to sech a degree that he camps down on a shoe-box an' allows he needs a drink. Boggs says he'll go after it, when Tutt breaks in an' announces that he's got a bluff to hand up.

"'If I'm dead certain,' says Tutt, surveyin' of the Signal party a heap doubtful; 'if I was shore now that this gent wouldn't leave the reservation none, I'd go that bond myse'f. But I'm in no sech fix financial as makes it right for me to get put in the hole for fifty thousand dollars by no stranger, however intimate we be. But yere's what I'm willin' to do: If this sharp wears hobbles so he can't up an' cantèr off, why, rather than see a young gent's neck a foot longer, I goes this bail myse'f.'.

"The Signal party is eager for hobbles, an' he gives Tutt his word to sign up the documents an' he wont run a little bit.

"'Which the same bein' now settled, congenial an' legal,' says Enright, when Tutt signs up; 'Jack Moore he'ps the gent on with them hobbles, an' the court stands adjourned till further orders.'

"After he's all hobbled an' safe, Tutt an' the Signal party starts over for the post-office, both progressin' some slow an' reluctant because of the Signal party's hobbles holdin' him down to a shuffle. As they toils along, Tutt says:

"'An' now that this yere affair ends so successful, I'd shore admire to know whatever you an' that cut-throat takes to chewin' of each other's manes for, anyway? Why did you refoose to bow?'

"'Which I never refooses once,' says the Signal party; 'I salootes this Texas gent with pleasure, if that's what he needs.'

"'In that case,' says Tutt, 'you make yourse'f comfortable leanin' ag'in this buildin', an' I'll project over an' see if this embroglio can't be reeconciled a lot. Mootual apol'gies an' whiskey, looks like, ought to reepair them dissensions easy.'

"So the Signal party leans up ag'in the front of the post-office an' surveys his hobbles mighty melancholy, while Tutt goes over to the Red Light to look up Texas Thompson. It ain't no time when he's headed back with Texas an' the balance of the band.

"'Give us your hand, pard,' says Texas, a heap effoosive, as he comes up to the Signal party; 'I learns from our common friend, Dave Tutt, that this yere's a mistake, an' I tharfore forgives you freely all the trouble you causes. It's over now an' plumb forgot. You're a dead game sport, an' I shakes your hand with pride.'

"'Same yere,' says Doc Peets, also shakin' of the Signal party's hand, which is sort o' limp an' cheerless.

"However, we rips off his hobbles, an' then the outfit steers over to the Red Light to be regaled after all our hard work.

"'Yere's hopin' luck an' long acquaintance, stranger,' says Texas, holdin' up his glass to the Signal party, who is likewise p'lite, but feeble.

"'Which the joyous outcome of this tangle

shows,' says Dan Boggs, as he hammers his glass on the bar an' shouts for another all 'round,' that you-all can't have too much talk swappin', when the objects of the meetin' is to avert blood. How much better we feels, standin' yere drinkin' our nose-paint all cool an' comfortable, an' congrat'latin' the two brave sports who's with us, than if we has a corpse sawed onto us onexpected, an' is driven to go grave-diggin' in sech sun-blistered, sizzlin' weather as this.'

"'That's whatever,' says Dave Tutt; 'an' I fills my cup in approval, you can gamble, of them observations.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

Death; and the Donna Anna.

"LOCOWEED? Do I savey loco?" The Old Cattleman's face offered full hint of his amazement as he repeated in the idiom of his day and kind the substance of my interrogatory. "Why, son," he continued, "every longhorn who's ever cinched a Colorado saddle, or roped a steer, is plumb aware of locoweed. Loco is Mexicano for mad—crazy. An' cattle or mules or ponies or anythin' else, that makes a repast of locoweed—which as a roole they don't, bein' posted instinctif that loco that a-way is no *bueno*—goes crazy; what we-all in the Southwest calls 'locoed.'

"Whatever does this yere plant resemble? I ain't no sharp on loco, but the brand I encounters is green, bunchy, stiff, an' stands taller than the grass about it. An' it ain't allers thar when looked for, loco ain't. It's one of these yere migratory weeds; you'll see it growin' about the range mebby one or two seasons, an' then it sort o' pulls its freight. Thar wont come no more loco for years.

"Mostly, as I observes prior, anamiles disdains loco, an' passes it up as bad medicine. They're organized with a notion ag'inst it, same as ag'inst rattle-

snakes An'as for them latter reptiles, you can take a preacher's hoss, foaled in the lap of civilization, who ain't seen nothin' more broadenin' than the reg'lar church service, with now an' then a revival, an' yet he's born knowin' so much about rattlesnakes in all their hein'ousness, that he'll hunch his back an' go soarin' 'way up yonder at the first *Zizz-z-z-z.*

"Doc Peets informs me once when we crosses up with some locoweed over by the Cow Springs, that thar's two or three breeds of this malignant vegetable. He writes down for me the scientific name of the sort we gets ag'inst. Thar she is."

And my friend produced from some recess of a gigantic pocketbook a card whereon the learned Peets had written *Oxytropis Lamberti.*

"That's what Peets says loco is," he resumed, as I handed back the card. "Of course, I don't go surgin' off pronouncin' no sech words; shorely not in mixed company. Some gent might take it personal an' resent it. But I likes to pack 'em about, an' search 'em out now an' then, jest to gaze on an' think what a dead cold scientist Doc Peets is. He's shorely the high kyard; thar never is that drug-sharp in the cow country in my day who's fit to pay for Peets' whiskey. Scientific an' eddicated to a feather aige, Peets is.

"You-all oughter heard him lay for one of them cliff-climbin', bone-huntin' stone c'llectors who comes out from Washin'ton for the Gov'ment. One of these yere deep people strikes Wolfville on one of them rock-roundups he's makin', an' for a-while

it looks like he's goin' to split things wide open. He's that contrary about his learnin', he wont use nothin' but words of four syllables—words that runs about eight to the pound. He comes into the New York Store where Boggs an' Tutt an' me is assembled, an', you hear me, son! that savant has us walkin' in a cirkle in a minute.

"It's Peets who relieves us. Peets strolls up an' engages this person in a debate touchin' mule-hoof hawgs; the gov'ment sport maintainin' thar ain't no sech swine with hoofs like a mule, because he's never heard about 'em; an' Peets takin' the opp'site view because he's done met an' eat 'em a whole lot.

"'The mere fact,' says Peets to this scientist, 'that you mavericks never knows of this mule-hoof hawg, cannot be taken as proof he does not still root an' roam the land. Thar's more than one of you Washin'ton shorthorns who's chiefly famed for what he's failed to know. The mule-hoof hawg is a fact; an' the ignorance of closet naturalists shall not prevail ag'inst him. His back is arched like a greyhound's, he's about the thickness of a bowie-knife, he's got hoofs like a mule, an' sees his highest deevelopment in the wilds of Arkansaw.'

"But speakin' of locoweed, it's only o'casional that cattle or mules or broncos partakes tharof. Which I might repeat for the third time that, gen-'ral, they eschews it. But you-all never will know how wise a anamile is till he takes to munchin' loco.

Once he's plumb locoed, he jest don't know nothin'; then it dawns on you, by compar'son like, how much he saveys prior. The change shows plainest in mules; they bein'—that is, the mule normal an' before he's locoed—the wisest of beasts. Wise, did I say? A mule is more than wise, he's sagacious. An' thar's a mighty sight of difference. To be simply wise, all one has to do is set 'round an' think wise things, an' mebby say 'em. It's only when a gent goes trackin' 'round an' does wise things, you calls him sagacious. An' mules *does* wisdom.

"Shore! I admits it; I'm friendly to mules. If the Southwest ever onbends in a intellectual competition—whites barred—mules will stand at the head. The list should come out, mules, coyotes, Injuns, Mexicans, ponies, jack rabbits, sheep-herders, an' pra'ry dogs, the last two bein' shorely imbecile.

"Yes, son; you can lean up ag'inst the intelligence of a mule an' go to sleep. Not but what mules hasn't their illoosions, sech as white mares an' sim'lar reedic'lous inflooences; but them's weaknesses of the sperit rather than of mind.

"While mules don't nacherally go scoutin' for loco, an' commonly avoids said weed when found, if they ever does taste it once, they never quits it as long as they lives. It's like whiskey to Huggins an' Old Monte; the appetite sort o' goes into camp with 'em an' takes possession. No; a locoed mule ain't vicious nor voylent; it's more like the tree-

mors—he sees spectacles that ain't thar none. I've beheld a locoed mule that a-way, standin' alone on the level plains in the sun, kickin' an' pitchin' to beat a straight flush. He thinks he's surrounded by Injuns or other hostiles; he's that crazy he don't know grass from t'ran 'lers. An' their mem'ry's wiped out; they forgets to eat an' starves to death. That's the way they dies, onless some party who gets worked up seein' 'em about, takes a Winchester an' pumps a bullet into 'em.

"Yes; Peets says if a gent was to take to loadin' up on loco, or deecoctions tharof, he'd become afflicted by bats, same as cattle an' mules. But no one I knows of, so far as any news of it ever comes grazin' my way, is that ongyarded. I never hears tell in detail of sech a case but onct; an' that's a tale that Old Man Enright sets forth one evenin' in the Red Light.

"We-all is settin' 'round the faro layout at the time. Cherokee Hall is back of the box, with Faro Nell on the look-out's stool; but nobody's feelin' playful, an' no money's bein' changed in. It's only about first drink time in the evenin', which, as a season, is prematoor for faro-bank. It's Dave Tutt who brings up the matter with some remarks he makes touchin' the crazy-hoss conduct of a party who works over to the stage company's corral. This hoss-hustler is that eccentric he's ediotic, an' is known as 'Locoed Charlie.' It's him who final falls a prey to ants that time.

"'An' it's my belief,' asserts Tutt, as he con-

cloodes his relations of the ranikaboo breaks of this party, 'that if this Charlie, speakin' mine fashion, was to take his intellects over to the assay office in Tucson, they wouldn't show half a ounce of idee to the ton; wouldn't even show a color. Which he's shore locoed.'

"'Speakin' of being locoed that a-way,' says Enright, 'recalls an incident that takes place back when I'm a yearlin' an' assoomes my feeble part in the Mexican War. That's years ago, but I don't know of nothin' sadder than that story, nothin' more replete of sobs. Not that I weeps tharat, for I'm a thoughtless an' a callous yooth, but, all the same, it glooms me up a heap.'

"'Is it a love story, Daddy Enright?' asks Faro Nell, all eager, an' bendin' towards Enright across the layout.

"'It shows brands an' y'ear marks as sech, Nellie,' says Enright; 'love an' loco makes up the heft of it.'

"'Then tell it,' urges Faro Nell. 'I'm actooally hungerin' for a love story,' an' she reaches down an' squeezes Cherokee's hand onder the table.

"Cherokee squeezes hers, an' turns his deal box on its side to show thar's no game goin', an' leans back with the rest of us to listen. Black Jack, who knows his mission on this earth, brings over a bottle with glasses all 'round.

"'Yere's to you, Nellie,' says Texas Thompson, as we shoves the nose-paint about. 'While that divorce edict my wife wins back in Laredo modifies

my interest in love tales, an' whereas I don't feel them thrills as was the habit of me onct, still, in a subdooed way I can drink happiness to you.'

"'Texas,' says Boggs, settin' down his glass an' bendin' a eye full of indignant reproach on Thompson; 'Texas, before I'd give way to sech onmanly weakness, jest because my wife's done stampeded, I'd j'ine the church. Sech mush from a cow-man is disgraceful. You'll come down to herdin' sheep if you keeps on surrenderin' yourse'f to sech sloppy bluffs.'

"'See yere, Dan,' retorts Thompson, an' his eye turns red on Boggs; 'my feelin's may be bowed onder losses which sech nachers as yours is too coarse to feel, but you can gamble your bottom dollar, jest the same, I will still resent insultin' criticisms. I advises you to be careful an' get your chips down right when you addresses me, or you may quit loser on the deal.'

"'Now you're a couple of fine three-year-olds!' breaks in Jack Moore. 'Yere we be, all onbuckled an' fraternal, an' Enright on the brink of a love romance by the ardent requests of Nell, an' you two longhorns has to come prancin' out an' go pawin' for trouble. You know mighty well, Texas, that Boggs is your friend an' the last gent to go harassin' you with contoomely.'

"'Right you be, Jack,' says Boggs plenty prompt; 'if my remarks to Texas is abrupt, or betrays heat, it's doo to the fact that it exasperates me to see the most elevated gent in camp—for

so I holds Texas Thompson to be—made desolate by the wild breaks of a lady who don't know her own mind, an' mighty likely ain't got no mind to know.'

"'I reckons I'm wrong, Dan,' says Thompson, turnin' apol'getic. 'Let it all go to the diskyard. I'm that peevish I simply ain't fit to stay yere nor go anywhere else. I ain't been the same person since my wife runs cimmaron that time an' demands said sep'ration.'

"'Bein' I'm a married man,' remarks Dave Tutt, sort o' gen'ral, but swellin' out his chest an' puttin' on a lot of dog at the same time, 'an' wedded to Tucson Jennie, the same bein' more or less known, I declines all partic'pation in discussions touchin' the sex. I could, however, yoonite with you-all in another drink, an' yereby su'gests the same. Barkeep, it's your play.'

"'That's all right about another drink,' says Faro Nell, 'but I wants to state that I sympathizes with Texas in them wrongs. I has my views of a female who would up an' abandon a gent like Texas Thompson, an' I explains it only on the theery that she shorely must have been coppered in her cradle.'

"'Nellie onderstands my feelin's,' says Texas, an' he's plumb mournful, 'an' I owes her for them utterances. However, on second thought, an' even if it is a love tale, if Enright will resoome his relations touchin' that eepisode of the Mexican War, I figgers that it may divert me from them divorce

griefs I alloodes to. An', at any rate, win or lose, I assures Enright his efforts will be regyarded.'

"Old Man Enright takes his seegyar out of his mouth an' rouses up a bit. He's been wropped in thought doorin' the argyments of Boggs an' Thompson, like he's tryin' to remember a far-off past. As Thompson makes his appeal, he braces up.

"'Now that Dan an' Texas has ceased buckin',' says Enright, 'an' each has all four feet on the ground, I'll try an' recall them details. As I remarks, its towards the close of the Mexican War. Whatever I'm doin' in that carnage is a conundrum that's never been solved. I had hardly shed my milk teeth, an' was only 'leven hands high at the time. An' I ain't so strong physical, but I feels the weight of my spurs when I walks. As I looks back to it, I must have been about as valyooable an aid to the gov'ment, as the fifth kyard in a poker hand when four of a kind is held. The most partial an' besotted of critics would have conceded that if I'd been left out entire, that war couldn't have suffered material changes in its results. However, to get for'ard, for I sees that Nellie's patience begins to mill an' show symptoms of comin' stampede.

"'It's at the close of hostil'ties,' goes on Enright, 'an' the company I'm with is layin' up in the hills about forty miles back from Vera Cruz, dodgin' yellow fever. We was cavalry, what the folks in Tennessee calls a "critter company," an', hailin' mostly from that meetropolis or its vicinity, we was known to ourse'fs at least as the "Pine Knot Cava-

liers." Thar's a little Mexican village where we be that's called the "Plaza Perdita." An' so we lays thar at the Plaza Perdita, waitin' for orders an' transportation to take us back to the States.

"'Which most likely we're planted at this village about a month, an' the Mexicans is beginnin' to get used to us; an' we on our parts is playin' monte, an' eatin' frijoles, an' accommodatin' ourse'fs to the simple life of the place. Onct a week the chaplain preaches to us. He holds that Mexico is a pagan land; an', entertainin' this idee, he certainly does make onusual efforts to keep our morals close-herded, an' our souls bunched an' banded up in the Christian faith, as expressed by the Baptis' church. Candor, however, compels me to say that this yere pulpit person can't be deescribed as a heavy winner on the play.'

"'Was you-all so awful bad?' asks Faro Nell.

"'No,' replies Enright, 'we ain't so bad none; but our conduct is a heap onhampered, which is the same thing to the chaplain. He gives it out emphatic, after bein' with the Pine Knot Cavaliers over a year, that he plumb despairs of us becomin' christians.'

"'Whatever does he lay down on you-all like that for?' says Faro Nell. 'Couldn't a soldier be a christian, Daddy Enright?'

"'Why, I reckons he might,' says Enright, he'pin' himse'f to a drink; 'a soldier could be a christian, Nellie, but after all it ain't necessary.

"'Still, we-all likes the chaplain because them

ministrations of his is entertainin'; an', for that matter, he likes us a lot, an' in more reelaxed moments allows we ain't so plumb crim'nal—merely loose like on p'ints of doctrine.'

"'Baptis' folks is shore strong on doctrines,' says Tutt, coincidin' in with Enright. 'I knows that myse'f. Doctrine is their long suit. They'll go to any len'ths for doctrines, you hear me! I remembers once ridin' into a hamlet back in the Kaintucky mountains. Thar ain't one hundred people in the village, corral count. An' yet I notes two church edifices.

"'"You-all is plenty opulent on sanctooaries," I says to the barkeep at the tavern where I camps for the night. "It's surprisin', too, when you considers the size of the herd. What be the two deenom'nations that worships at them structures?"

"'"Both Baptis'," says the barkeep.

"'"Whyever, since they're ridin' the same range an' runnin' the same brand," I says, "don't they combine like cattle folks an' work their round-ups together?"

"'"They splits on doctrine," says the barkeep; "you couldn't get 'em together with a gun. They disagrees on Adam. That outfit in the valley holds that Adam was all right when he started, but later he struck something an' glanced off; them up on the hill contends that Adam was a hoss-thief from the jump. An' thar you be! You couldn't reeconcile 'em between now an' the crack of doom. Doctrines to a Baptis' that a-way is the entire check-rack."'

"'To ag'in pick up said narratif,' says Enright, when Tutt subsides, 'at the p'int where Dave comes spraddlin' in with them onasked reminiscences, I may say that a first source of pleasure to us, if not of profit, while we stays at the Plaza Perdita, is a passel of Mexicanos with a burro train that brings us our pulque from some'ers back further into the hills.'"

"What's pulque?" I interjected.

It was plain that my old gentleman of cows as little liked my interruption as Enright liked that of the volatile Tutt. He hid his irritation, however, under an iron politeness and explained.

"Pulque is a disapp'intin' form of beverage, wharof it takes a bar'l to get a gent drunk," he observed. And then, with some severity: "It ain't for me to pull no gun of criticism, but I'm amazed that a party of your attainments, son, is ignorant of pulque. It's, as I says, a drink; an' it tastes like glucose an' looks like yeast. It comes from a plant, what the Mexicans calls 'maguey,' an' Peets calls a 'aloe.' The pulque gatherers scoops out the blossom of the maguey while it's a bud. They leaves the place hollow; what wood-choppers back in Tennessee, when I'm a colt, deescribes as 'bucketin' the stump.' This yere hollow fills up with oozin' sap, an' the Mexican dips out two gallons a day an keeps it up for a month. That's straight; sixty gallons from one maguey before ever it quits an' refooses to further turn the game. That's pulque; an' when them Greasers gathers

it, they puts it into a pigskin—skinned complete, the pig is; them pulque receptacles is made of the entire bark of the anamile. When the pulque's inside, they packs it, back down an' hung by all four laigs to the saddle, a pigskin on each side of the burro. It's gathered the evenin' previous, an' brought into camp in the night so as to keep it cool.

"When I'm a child, an' before ever I connects myse'f with the cow trade, if thar's a weddin', we-all has what the folks calls a 'infare;' an' I can remember a old lady from the No'th who contreebutes to these yere festivals a drink she calls 'sprooce beer.' An' pulque, before it takes to frettin' an' fermentin' 'round, in them pigskins, reminds me a mighty sight of that sprooce beer. Later it most likely reminds you of the pigskin.

"Mexican barkeeps, when they sells pulque, aims to dispose of it two glasses at a clatter. It gives their conceit a chance to spread itse'f an' show. The pulque is in a tub down back of the bar. This yere vain Mexican seizes two glasses between his first an' second fingers, an' with a finger in each glass. Then he dips 'em full backhanded; an' allers comes up with the back of his hand an' the two fingers covered with pulque. He claps 'em on the bar, eyes you a heap sooperior like he's askin' you to note what a acc'rate, high-grade barkeep he is, an' then raisin' his hand, he slats the pulque off his fingers into the two glasses. If he spatters a drop on the bar, it shows he's a bungler, onfit for his high p'sition, an' oughter be

out on the hills tendin' goats instead of dealin' pulque.

"What do they do with the sour pulque? Make mescal of it—a sort o' brandy, two hookers of which changes you into a robber. No, thar's mighty few still-houses in Mexico. But that's no set-back to them Greasers when they're out to construct mescal. As a roole Mexicans is slow an oninventive; but when the question becomes the arrangement of somethin' to be drunk with, they're plenty fertile. Jest by way of raw material, if you'll only confer on a Mexican a kettle, a rifle bar'l, a saddle cover, an' a pigskin full of sour pulque, he'll be conductin' a mescal still in full blast at the end of the first hour. But to go back to Enright's yarn.

"'These yere pulque people,' says Enright, 'does a fa'rly rapid commerce. For while, as you-all may know, pulque is tame an' lacks in reebound as compared with nose-paint, still when pulque is the best thar is, the Pine Knot Cavaliers of the Plaza Perdita invests heavily tharin. That pulque's jest about a stand-off for the chaplain's sermons.

"'It's the fourth trip of the pulque sellers, when the Donna Anna shows in the door. The Donna Anna arrives with 'em; an' the way she bosses 'round, an' sets fire to them pulque slaves, notifies me they're the Donna Anna's peonies.

"'I'm sort o' pervadin' about the plaza when the Donna Anna rides up. Thar's an old she-wolf with her whose name is Magdalena. I'm not myse'f what they calls in St. Looey a "connoshur" of

female loveliness, an' it's a pity now that some gifted gent like Doc Peets yere don't see this Donna Anna that time, so's he could draw you her picture, verbal. All I'm able to state is that she's as beautiful as a cactus flower; an' as vivid. She's tall an' strong for a Mexican, with a voice like velvet, graceful as a mountain lion, an' with eyes that's soft an' deep an' black, like a deer's. She's shorely a lovely miracle, the Donna Anna is; an' as dark an' as warm an' as full of life as a night in Joone. She's of the *grande;* for the mule she's ridin', gent-fashion, is worth forty ponies. Its coat is soft, an' shiny like this yere watered silk, while its mane an' tail is braided with a hundred little silver bells. The Donna Anna is dressed half Mexican an' half Injun, an' thar's likewise a row of bells about the wide brim of her Chihuahua hat.

"'Thar's mebby a half-dozen of us standin' 'round when the Donna Anna comes up. Nacherally, we-all is interested. The Donna Anna, bein' only eighteen an' a Mexican, is not abashed. She waves her hand an' says, "How! how!" Injun fashion, an' gives us a white flash of teeth between her red lips. Then a band of nuns comes out of a little convent, which is one of the public improvements of the Plaza Perdita, an' they rounds up the Donna Anna an' the wrinkled Magdalena, an' takes 'em into camp. The Donna Anna an' the other is camped in the convent doorin' the visit. No, they're not locked up nor gyarded, an' the Donna Anna comes an' goes in an' out of that convent as

free as birds. The nuns, too, bow before her like her own peonies.

"'Thar's a Lootenant Jack Spencer with us; he hails from further up the Cumberland than me—some'ers near Nashville. He's light-ha'red an' light-hearted, Spencer is; an' as straight an' as strong as a pine-tree. S'ciety ain't throwin' out no skirmish lines them days, an' of course Spencer an' the Donna Anna meets up with each other; an' from the onbroken hours they tharafter proceeds to invest in each other's company, one is jestified in assoomin' they experiences a tender interest. The Donna Anna can't talk Americano, but Spencer is a sharp on Spanish; an' you can bet a pony, if he wasn't, he'd set to studyin' the language right thar.

"'Nothin' much is thought by the Pine Knot Cavaliers of an' concernin' the attitoodes of Spencer an' the Donna Anna touchin' one another. Love it might be, an' less we cares for that. Our army, when it ain't fightin', is makin' love throughout the entire Mexican War; an' by the time we're at the Plaza Perdita, love, mere everyday love, either as a emotion or exhibition, is plenty commonplace. An' so no one is interested, an' no one keeps tabs on Spencer an' the Donna Anna. Which, if any one had, he'd most likely got ag'inst Spencer's gun; wharfore, it's as well mebby that this yere lack-luster feelin' prevails.

"'It's about the tenth day since the Donna Anna gladdens us first. Orders comes up from Vera

Cruz for the Pine Knot Cavaliers to come down to the coast an' embark for New Orleans. The word is passed, an' our little jimcrow camp buzzes like bees, with us gettin' ready to hit the trail. Spencer asks "leave;" an' then saddles up an' starts at once. He says he's got a trick or two to turn in Vera Cruz before we sails. That's the last we-all ever beholds of Lootenant Jack Spencer.

"'When Spencer don't show up none in Vera Cruz, an' the ship throws loose without him, he's marked, "missin'," on the company's books. If he's a private, now, it would have been "deserted;" but bein' Spencer's an officer, they makes it "missin'." An' they gets it right, at that; Spencer is shorely missin'. Spencer not only don't come back to Tennessee none; he don't even send no word nor make so much as a signal smoke to let on whar he's at. This yere, to some, is more or less disapp'intin'.

"'Thar's a lady back in Tennessee which Spencer's made overtures to, before he goes to war that time, to wed. Young she is; beautiful, high-grade, corn-fed, an' all that; an' comes of one of the most clean-bred fam'lies of the whole Cumberland country. I will interject right yere to say that thar's ladies of two sorts. If a loved one, tender an' troo, turns up missin' at roll-call, an' the phenomenon ain't accompanied with explanations, one sort thinks he's quit, an' the other thinks he's killed. Spencer's inamorata is of the former. She's got what the neighbors calls "hoss sense." She listens

to what little thar is to tell of Spencer fadin' from our midst that Plaza Perdita day, shrugs her shoulders, an' turns her back on Spencer's mem'ry. An' the next news you gets is of how, inside of three months, she jumps some gent—who's off his gyard an' is lulled into feelin's of false secoority—ropes, throws, ties an' weds him a heap, an' he wakes up to find he's a gone fawn-skin, an' to realize his peril after he's onder its hoofs. That's what this Cumberland lady does. I makes no comments; I simply relates it an' opens a door an' lets her out.

"'I'm back in Tennessee mighty nigh a year before ever I hears ag'in of Lootenant Jack Spencer of the Pine Knot Cavaliers. It's this a-way: I'm stoppin' with my old gent near Warwhoop Crossin', the same bein' a sister village to Pine Knot, when he's recalled to my boyish mind. It looks like Spencer ain't got no kin nearer than a aunt, an' mebby a stragglin' herd of cousins. He never does have no brothers nor sisters; an' as for fathers an' mothers an' sech, they all cashes in before ever Spencer stampedes off for skelps in that Mexican War at all.

"'These yere kin of Spencer's stands his absence ca'mly, an' no one hears of their settin' up nights, or losin' sleep, wonderin' where he's at. Which I don't reckon now they'd felt the least cur'ous concernin' him—for they're as cold-blooded as channel catfish—if it ain't that Spencer's got what them law coyotes calls a "estate," an' this property sort o' presses their hands. So it falls out like, that along

at the last of the year, a black-coat party—lawyer he is—comes breezin' up to me in Warwhoop an' says he's got to track this yere Spencer to his last camp, dead or alive, an' allows I'd better sign for the round-up an' accompany the expedition as guide, feelos'pher an' friend—kind o' go 'long an' scout for the campaign.

"'Two months later me an' that law sharp is in the Plaza Perdita. We heads up for the padre. It's my view from the first dash outen the box that the short cut to find Spencer is to acc'rately discover the Donna Anna; so we makes a line for the padre. In Mexico, the priests is the only folks who saveys anythin'; an', as if to make up for the hoomiliatin' ignorance of the balance of the herd, an' promote a average, these yere priests jest about knows everythin'. An' I has hopes of this partic'lar padre speshul; for I notes that, doorin' them times when Spencer an' the Donna Anna is dazzlin' one another at the Plaza Perdita, the padre is sort o' keepin' cases on the deal, an' tryin' as well as he can to hold the bars an' fences up through some covert steers he vouchsafes from time to time to the old Magdalena.

"'No; you bet this padre don't at that time wax vocif'rous or p'inted none about Spencer an' the Donna Anna. Which he's afraid if he gets obnoxious that a-way, the Pine Knot Cavaliers will rope him up a lot an' trade him for beef. Shore! don't you-all know that? When we're down in Mexico that time, with old Zach Taylor, an' needs

meat, we don't go ridin' our mounts to death combin' the hills for steers. All we does is round up a band of padres, or monks, an' then trade 'em to their par'lyzed congregations for cattle. We used to get about ten steers for a padre; an' we doles out them divines, one at a time, as we needs the beef. It's shorely a affectin' sight to see them parish'ners, with tears runnin' down their faces, drivin' up the cattle an' takin' them religious directors of theirs out o' hock.

"'We finds the padre out back of his wickeyup, trimmin' up a game-cock that he's matched to fight the next day. The padre is little, fat, round, an' amiable as owls. Nacherally, I has to translate for him an' the law sport.

"'"You do well to come to me, my children," he says. "The Señor Juan"—that's what the padre calls Spencer—"the Señor Juan is dead. It is ten days since he passed. The Donna Anna? She also is dead an' with the Señor Juan. We must go to the Hacienda Tulorosa, which is the house of the Donna Anna. That will be to-morrow. Meanwhile, who is to protect Juarez, my beloved chicken, in his battle when I will be away? Ah! I remember! The Don Jose Miguel will do. He is skilful of cocks of the game. Also he has bet money on Juarez; so he will be faithful. Therefore, to-morrow, my children, we will go to the Donna Anna's house. There I will tell you the story of the Señor Juan."

"'The Hacienda Tulorosa is twenty miles back

further in the hills. The padre, the law sharp an me is started before sun-up, an' a good road-gait fetches us to the Hacienda Tulorosa in a couple of hours. It's the sort of a ranch which a high grade Mexican with a strong bank-roll would throw up. It's built all 'round a court, with a flower garden and a fountain in the centre. As we comes up, I observes the old Magdalena projectin' about the main door of the *casa*, stirrin' up some lazy peonies to their daily toil—which, to use the word "toil," however, in connection with a Greaser, is plumb sarcastic. The padre leads us into the *casa*, an' the bitter-lookin' Magdalena hustles us some grub; after which we-all smokes a bit. Then the padre gets up an' leads the way.

"'"Come, my children," says the padre, "I will show you the graves. Then you shall hear what there is of the Señor Juan an' the Donna Anna."

"'It's a set-back,' continyoos Enright, as he signals Black Jack the barkeep to show us he's awake; 'it's shorely a disaster that some book-instructed gent like Peets or Colonel Sterett don't hear this padre when he makes them revelations that day. Not that I overlooks a bet, or don't recall 'em none; but I ain't upholstered with them elegancies of diction needed to do 'em justice now. My language is roode an' corrupted with years of sech surroundin's as cattle an' kyards. It's too deeply freighted with the slang of the plains an' the faro-banks to lay forth a tale of love an' tenderness, as the o'casion demands. Of course, I can read an'

write common week-day print; but when thar's a call for more, I'm mighty near as illit'rate that a-way as Boggs.'

"'Which, as you su'gests, I'm plumb ignorant,' admits Boggs, 'but it ain't the fault none of my bringin' up neither. It jest looks like I never can learn print nohow when I'm young. I'm simply born book-shy, an' is terrified at schools from my cradle. An', say! I'm yere to express my regrets at them weaknesses. If I was a eddicated gent like Doc Peets is, you can put down all you has, I'd be the cunnin'est wolf that ever yelps in Cochise County.'

"'An' thar ain't no doubt of that, Boggs,' observes Enright, as he reorganizes to go ahead with them Donna Anna mem'ries of his. 'Which if you only has a half of Peets' game now, you'd be the hardest thing—mental—to ride that ever invades the Southwest. Nacherally, an' in a wild an' ontrained way, you're wise. But to resoome: As much as I can, I'll give the padre in his own words. He takes us out onder a huddle of pine trees, where thar's two graves side by side, an' with a big cross of wood standin' gyard at the head. Thar's quite a heap o' rocks, about as big as your shet hand, heaped up on 'em. It's the Mexicans does that. Every Greaser who goes by, says a pray'r, an' tosses a rock on the grave. When we-all is camped comfortable, the padre begins.

"'"This is that which was with the Señor Juan and the Donna Anna," he says. "They adored

each other with their hearts. It was many months ago when, from the Plaza Perdita, they came together here to the Donna Anna's house, the Hacienda Tulorosa. Who was the Donna Anna? Her mother was an Indian, a Navajo, and the child of a head man. Her father was the Señor Ravel, a captain of war he was, and the Americanos slew him at Buena Vista. No; they were not married, the father and the mother of the Donna Anna. But what then? There are more children than weddings in Mexico. Also the mother of the Donna Anna was a Navajo. The Captain Ravel long ago brought her to the Hacienda Tulorosa for her home—her and the Donna Anna. But the mother lived not long, for the Indian dies in a house. This is years gone by; and the Donna Anna always lived at the *Casa* Tulorosa.

"'"No; the Señor Juan and the Donna Anna do not marry. They might; but the Señor Juan became like a little child—*muchachito.* This was within a few days after he came here. Then he lived until ten days ago; but always a little child.

"'"When the Señor Juan is dead, the Donna Anna sends for me. The Señor Juan is ready for the grave when I arrive. 'Is it to bury him that I come?' I ask. 'No; it is to bury me,' says the Donna Anna. Ah! she was very beautiful! the Donna Anna. You should have seen her, my children.

"'"When the Señor Juan is laid away, the Donna Anna tells me all. 'He came, the Señor Juan,'

says the Donna Anna, 'and I gave him all my love. But in a day he was to have gone to his home far away with the Americanos. Then I would never more see him nor hear him, and my soul would starve and die. There, too, was a Señorita, an Americana; she would have my place. Father, what could I do? I gave him the loco to drink; not much, but it was enough. Then his memory sank and sank; and he forgot the Señorita Americana; and he remembered not to go away to his home; and he became like a little child with me. The good loco drove every one from his heart; and all from his mind—all, save me, the Donna Anna. I was the earth and the life to him. And so, night and day, since he came until now he dies, my arms and my heart have been about the Señor Juan. And I have been very, very happy with my *muchachito*, the Señor Juan. Yes, I knew he would go; because none may live who drinks the loco. But it would be months; and I did not care. He would be mine, ever my own, the Señor Juan; for when he died, could I not die and follow him? We were happy these months with the flowers and the fountain and each other. I was happier than he; for I was like the mother, and he like a little child. But it was much peace with love! And we will be happy again to-morrow when I go where he waits to meet me. Father, you are to remain one day, and see that I am buried with the Señor Juan.'

"'"Then," goes on the padre, "I say to the Donna Anna, 'If you are to seek the Señor Juan,

you will first kneel in prayer and in confession, and have the parting rites of the church.' But the Donna Anna would not. 'I will go as went the Señor Juan,' she says; 'else I may find another heaven and we may not meet.' Nor could I move the Donna Anna from her resolution. 'The Señor Juan is a heretic and must now be in perdition,' I say. 'Then will I, too, go there,' replies the Donna Anna, 'for we must be together; I and the Señor Juan. He is mine and I will not give him up to be alone with the fiends or with the angels.' So I say no more to the Donna Anna of the church.

"'"On the day to follow the burial of the Señor Juan, it is in the afternoon when the Donna Anna comes to me. Oh! she was twice lovely! 'Father,' she says, 'I come to say my *adios*. When the hour is done you will seek me by the grave of my Señor Juan.' Then she turns to go. 'And *adios* to you, my daughter,' I say, as she departs from my view. And so I smoke my cigars; and when the hour is done, I go also to the grave of the Señor Juan—the new grave, just made, with its low hill of warm, fresh earth.

"'"True! it was as you guess. There, with her face on that little round of heaped-up earth, lay the Donna Anna. And all the blood of her heart had made red the grave of her Señor Juan. The little knife she died by was still in her hand. No, I do not fear for them, my children. They are with the good; the Donna Anna and her Señor Juan. They were guiltless of all save love; and the good God does not punish love."'"

CHAPTER XIV.

How Jack Rainey Quit.

"CUSTOMARY, we has our social round-ups in the Red Light," observed the Old Cattleman; "which I mentions once it does us for a club. We're all garnered into said fold that time when Dave Tutt tells us how this yere Jack Rainey quits out.

"'Rainey gets downed,' says Tutt, 'mainly because his system's obscoore, an' it chances that a stranger who finds himse'f immeshed tharin takes it plumb ombrageous; an' pendin' explanations, gets tangled up with a pard of Rainey's, goes to a gun play, an' all accidental an' casooal Rainey wings his way to them regions of the blest.

"'Now I allers holds,' goes on Tutt, 'an' still swings an'rattles with that decision, that it's manners to ask strangers to drink; an' that no gent, onless he's a sky-pilot or possesses scrooples otherwise, has a right to refoose. Much less has a gent, bein' thus s'licited to licker, any license to take it hostile an' allow he's insulted, an' lay for his entertainers with weepons.'

"'Well, I don't know, neither,' says Texas Thompson, who's a heap dispootatious an' allers spraddlin' in on every chance for an argyment.

'Thar's a party, now deceased a whole lot—the Stranglers over in Socorro sort o' chaperones this yere gent to a cottonwood an' excloodes the air from his lungs with a lariat for mebby it's an hour —an' this party I'm alloodin' at, which his name is Fowler, is plumb murderous. Now, it's frequent with him when he's selected a victim that a-way, and while he's bickerin' with him up to the killin' p'int to invite said sacrifice to take a drink. When they're ag'inst the bar, this yere Fowler we-all strangles would pour out a glass of whiskey and chuck it in the eyes of that onfortunate he's out to down. Of course, while this party's blind with the nose-paint, he's easy; an' Fowler tharupon c'llects his skelp in manner, form an' time to suit his tastes. Now I takes it that manners don't insist none on no gent frontin' up to a bar on the invite of such felons as Fowler, when a drink that a-way means a speshul short-cut to the tomb.'

"'All this yere may be troo,' replies Tutt, 'but it's a exception. What I insists is, Texas, that speakin' wide an' free an' not allowin' none for sports of the Fowler brand, it's manners to ask strangers to stand in on what beverages is goin' an' that it's likewise manners for said strangers to accept; an' it shows that both sides concerned tharin is well brought up by their folks. Such p'liteness is manners, goin' an' comin', which brings me with graceful swoops back to how Jack Rainey gets shot up.'

"'But, after all,' breaks in Texas ag'in, for he

feels wranglesome, 'manners is frequent a question of where you be. What's manners in St. Looey may be bad jedgment in Texas; same as some commoonities plays straights in poker, while thar's regions where straights is barred.'

"'Texas is dead right about his State that a-way,' says Jack Moore, who's heedin' of the talk. 'Manners is a heap more inex'rable in Texas than other places. I recalls how I'm galivantin' 'round in the Panhandle country—it's years ago when I'm young an' recent—an' as I'm ridin' along south of the Canadian one day, I discerns a pony an' a gent an' a fire, an' what looks like a yearlin' calf tied down. I knows the pony for Lem Woodruff's cayouse, an' heads over to say "Howdy" to Lem. He's about half a mile away; when of a sudden he stands up—he's been bendin' over the yearlin' with a runnin' iron in his hand—an' gives a whoop an' makes some copious references towards me with his hands. I wonders what for a game he's puttin' up, an' whatever is all this yere sign-language likely to mean; but I keeps ridin' for'ard. It's then this Woodruff steps over to his pony, an' takin' his Winchester off the saddle, cuts down with it in my direction, an' onhooks her—"Bang!" The bullet raises the dust over about fifty yards to the right. Nacherally I pulls up my pony to consider this conduct. While I'm settin' thar tryin' to figger out Woodruff's system, thar goes that Winchester ag'in, an' a streak of dust lifts up, say, fifty yards to the left. I then sees Lem objects to me. I don t

like no gent to go carpin' an' criticisin' at me with a gun ; but havin' a Winchester that a-way, this yere Woodruff can overplay me with only a six-shooter, so I quits him an' rides contemptuous away. As I withdraws, he hangs his rifle on his saddle ag'in, picks up his runnin' iron an' goes back content an' all serene to his maverick.'"

"What is a maverick?" I asked, interrupting my friend in the flow of his narration.

"Why, I s'posed," he remarked, a bit testily at being halted, "as how even shorthorns an' tenderfeet knows what mavericks is. Mavericks, son, is calves which gets sep'rated from the old cows, their mothers, an' ain't been branded none yet. They're bets which the round-ups overlooks, an' don't get marked. Of course, when they drifts from their mothers, each calf for himse'f, an' no brands nor y'ear marks, no one can tell whose calves they be. They ain't branded, an' the old cows ain't thar to identify an' endorse 'em, an' thar you stands in ignorance. Them's mavericks.

"It all comes," he continued in further elucidation of mavericks, "when cattle brands is first invented in Texas. The owners, whose cattle is all mixed up on the ranges, calls a meetin' to decide on brands, so each gent'll know his own when he crosses up with it, an' won't get to burnin' powder with his neighbors over a steer which breeds an' fosters doubts. After every party announces what his brand an' y'ear mark will be, an' the same is put down in the book, a old longhorn named Maverick

addresses the meetin', an' puts it up if so be thar's no objection, now they all has brands but him, he'll let his cattle lope without markin', an' every gent'll savey said Maverick's cattle because they won't have no brand. Cattle without brands, that a-way, is to belong to Maverick, that's the scheme, an' as no one sees no reason why not, they lets old Maverick's proposal go as it lays.

"An' to cut her short, for obv'ous reasons, it ain't no time before Maverick, claimin' all the onbranded cattle, has herds on herds of 'em; whereas thar's good authority which states that when he makes his bluff about not havin' no brand that time, all the cattle old Maverick has is a triflin' bunch of Mexican steers an' no semblances of cows in his outfit. From which onpromisin', not to say barren, beginnin', Maverick owns thousands of cattle at the end of ten years. It all provokes a heap of merriment an' scorn. An' ever since that day, onmarked an' onbranded cattle is called 'mavericks.' But to go back ag'in to what Jack Moore is remarkin' about this yere outlaw, Woodruff, who's been bustin' away towards Jack with his Winchester.

"'It's a week later,' goes on Jack Moore, 'when I encounters this sport Woodruff in Howard's store over in Tascosa. I stands him up an' asks whatever he's shootin' me up for that day near the Serrita la Cruz.

"'"Which I never sees you nohow," replies this yere Woodruff, laughin'. "I never cuts down on you with no Winchester, for if I did, I'd got you a whole

lot. You bein' yere all petulant an' irritated is mighty good proof I never is shootin' none at you. But bein' you're new to the Canadian country an' to Texas, let me give you a few p'inters on cow ettyquette an' range manners. Whenever you notes a gent afar off with a fire goin' an' a yearlin' throwed an' hawg-tied ready to mark up a heap with his own private hieroglyphics, don't you-all go pesterin' 'round him. He ain't good company, sech a gent ain't. Don't go near him. It's ag'in the law in Texas to brand calves lonely an' forlorn that a-way, without stoppin' to herd 'em over to some well-known corral, an' the punishment it threatens, bein' several years in Huntsville, makes a gent when he's violatin' it a heap misanthropic, an' he don't hunger none for folks to come ridin' up to see about whatever he reckons he's at. Mebby later them visitors gets roped up before a co't, or jury, to tell whatever they may know. So, as I says, an' merely statin' a great trooth in Texas ettyquette, yereafter on beholdin' a fellow-bein' with a calf laid out to mark, don't go near him a little bit. It's manners to turn your back onto him an' ignore him plumb severe. He's a crim'nal, an' any se'f-respectin' gent is jestified in refoosin' to affiliate with him. Wherefore, you ride away from every outcast you tracks up ag'inst who is engaged like you says this onknown party is the day he fetches loose his Winchester at you over by the Serrita la Cruz."

"'That's what this Woodruff says,' concloodes Jack, windin' up his interruption, 'about what's

manners in Texas ; an' when it's made explicit that a-way, I sees the force of his p'sition. Woodruff an' me buys nose-paint for each other, shakes hearty, an' drops the discussion. But it shorely comes to this : manners, as Texas declar's, is sometimes born of geography, an' what goes for polish an' the p'lite play in St. Looey may not do none for Texas.'

"'Mighty likely,' says Old Man Enright, 'what Texas Thompson an' Jack Moore interjecks yere is dead c'rrect ; but after all this question about what's manners is 'way to one side of the main trail. I tharfore su'gests at this crisis that Black Jack do his best with a bottle, an' when every gent has got his p'ison, Dave Tutt proceeds for'ard with the killin' of this Jack Rainey.'

"'Goin' on as to said Rainey,' observes Tutt, followin' them remarks of Enright, 'as I explains when Texas an' Moore runs me down with them interestin' outbreaks, Rainey gets ag'inst it over in a jimcrow camp called Lido ; an' this yere is a long spell ago.

"'Rainey turns in an' charters every bar in Lido, an' gets his brand onto all the nose-paint. He's out to give the camp an orgy, an' not a gent can spend a splinter or lose a chip to any bar for a week. Them's Jack Rainey's commands. A sport orders his forty drops, an' the barkeep pricks it onto a tab ; at the end of a week Jack Rainey settles all along the line, an' the "saturnalia," as historians calls 'em, is over. I might add that Jack Rainey

gives way to these yere charities once a year, an the camp of Lido is plumb used tharto an' approves tharof.

"'On this sad o'casion when Jack Rainey gets killed, this yere excellent custom he invents is in full swing. Thar's notices printed plenty big, an' posted up in every drink-shop from the dance hall to the Sunflower saloon; which they reads as follows:

RUIN! RUIN! RUIN!
CUT LOOSE!
JACK RAINEY MAKES GOOD
ALL DRINKS
FOR
ONE WEEK. NAME YOUR POISON!

"'At this yere time, it's about half through Jack Rainey's week, an' the pop'lace of Lido, in consequence, is plumb happy an' content. They're holdin' co't at the time; the same bein' the first jestice, legal, which is dealt out in Lido.'

"'An' do you-all know,' puts in Dan Boggs, who's listenin' to Tutt, 'I'm mighty distrustful of co'ts. You go to holdin' of 'em, an' it looks like everybody gets wrought up to frenzy ontil life where them forums is held ain't safe for a second. I shall shorely deplore the day when a co't goes to openin' its game in Wolfville. It's "*adios*" to liberty an' peace an' safety from that time.'

"'You can go a yellow stack,' remarks Texas Thompson, who sets thar plumb loquacious an' locoed

to get in a speech, 'that Boggs sizes up right about them triboonals. They're a disturbin' element in any commoonity. I knowed a town in Texas which is that peaceful it's pastoral—that's what it is, it's like a sheep-fold, it's so meek an' easy—ontil one day they ups an' plays a co't an' jedge an' jury on that camp; rings in a herd of law sharps, an' a passel of rangers with Winchesters to back the deal. The town's that fretted tharat it gets full of nose-paint to the brim, an' then hops into the street for gen'ral practice with its guns. In the mornin' the round-up shows two dead an' five wounded, an' all for openin' co't on an outfit which is too frail to stand the strain of so much jestice onexpected.'

"'As I'm engaged in remarkin',' says Tutt, after Boggs an' Texas is redooced to quiet ag'in—Tutt bein' married most likely is used to interruptions, an' is shore patient that a-way—'as I states, they're holdin' co't, an' this day they emancipates from prison a party named Caribou Sam. They tries to prove this Caribou Sam is a hoss-thief, but couldn't fill on the draw, an' so Caribou works free of 'em an' is what they calls "'quitted."

"'As soon as ever the marshal takes the hobbles off this Caribou Sam—he's been held a captif off some'ers an' is packed into Lido onder gyard to be tried a lot—this yere malefactor comes bulgin' into the Sunflower an' declar's for fire-water. The bar-keep deals to him, an' Caribou Sam is assuaged.

"'When he goes to pay, a gent who's standin'

near shoves back his dust, an' says: "This is Jack Rainey's week—it's the great annyooal festival of Jack Rainey, an' your money's no good."

"'"But I aims to drink some more *poco tiempo*," says this Caribou Sam, who is new to Lido, an' never yet hears of Jack Rainey an' his little game, "an' before I permits a gent to subsidize my thirst, an' go stackin' in for my base appetites, you can gamble I want to meet him an' make his acquaintance. Where is this yere sport Jack Rainey, an' whatever is he doin' this on?"

"'The party who shoves Caribou's *dinero* off the bar, tells him he can't pay, an' explains the play, an' exhorts him to drink free an' frequent an' keep his chips in his war-bags.

"'"As I tells you," says this party to Caribou, "my friend Jack Rainey has treed the camp, an' no money goes yere but his till his further commands is known. Fill your hide, but don't flourish no funds, or go enlargin' on any weakness you has for buyin' your own licker. As for seein' Jack Rainey, it's plumb impossible. He's got too full to visit folks or be visited by 'em; but he's upsta'rs on some blankets, an' if his reason is restored by tomorry, you sends up your kyard an' pays him your regyards—pendin' of which social function, take another drink. Barkeep, pump another dose into this stranger, an' charge the same to Jack."

"'"This yere sounds good," says Caribou Sam, "but it don't win over me. Ontil I sees this person Rainey, I shall shorely decline all bottles which

is presented in his name. I've had a close call about a bronco I stole to-day, an' when the jury makes a verdict that they're sorry to say the evidence ain't enough to convict, the jedge warns me to be a heap careful of the company I maintains. He exhorts me to live down my past, or failin' which he'll hang me yet. With this bluff from the bench ringin' in my y'ears, I shall refoose drinks with all onknown sots, ontil I sees for myse'f they's proper characters for me to be sociable with. Tharfore, barkeep, I renoo my determination to pay for them drinks; at the same time, I orders another round. Do you turn for me or no?"

"'"Not none you don't," says the friend of Jack Rainey. "You can drink, but you can't pay—leastwise, you-all can't pay without gettin' all sort o' action on your money. This Rainey you're worried about is as good a gent as me, an' not at all likely to shake the standin' of a common hoss-thief by merely buyin' his nose-paint."

"'"Mine is shorely a difficult p'sition," says Caribou Sam. "What you imparts is scarce encouragin.' If this yere Rainey ain't no improvement onto you, I absolootely weakens on him an' turns aside from all relations of his proposin'. I'm in mighty bad report as the game stands, an' I tharfore insists ag'in on payin' for my own war medicine, as bein' a move necessary to protect my attitoodes before the public."

"'With these yere observations, Caribou Sam makes a bluff at the barkeep with a handful of

money. In remonstratin', Jack Rainey's pard nacherally pulls a gun, as likewise does Caribou Sam. Thar's the customary quantity of shootin', an' while neither Caribou nor his foe gets drilled, a bullet goes through the ceilin' an' sort o' sa'nters in a careless, indifferent way into pore Jack Rainey, where he's bedded down an' snorin' up above.

"'Shore, he's dead, Rainey is,' concloodes Dave, 'an' his ontimely takin' off makes Lido quit loser for three days of licker free as air. He's a splendid, gen'rous soul, Jack Rainey is; an' as I says at the beginnin', he falls a sacrifice to his love for others, an' in tryin' at his own expense to promote the happiness an' lift them burdens of his fellow-men.'

"'This yere miscreant, Caribou,' says Texas Thompson, 'is a mighty sight too punctilious about them drinks; which thar's no doubt of it. Do they lynch him?'

"'No,' says Tutt; 'from the calibre of the gun which fires the lead that snatches Rainey from us, it is cl'ar that it's the gent who's contendin' with Caribou who does it. Still public opinion is some sour over losin' them three days, an' so Caribou goes lopin' out of Lido surreptitious that same evenin', an' don't wait none on Rainey's obsequies. Caribou merely sends regrets by the barkeep of the Sunflower, reiterates the right to pay for them drinks, an' Lido sees him no more.'"

CHAPTER XV.

The Defiance of Gene Watkins.

"BE I religious that a-way?" More to embark him on some current of conversation than from any gnawing eagerness to discover his creed, I had aimed the question at my Old Cattleman.

"No," he continued, declining a proffered cigar, "I'll smoke my old pipe to-night. Be I religious? says you. Well, I ain't shorely livin' in what you'd call 'grace,' still I has my beliefs. Back in Tennessee my folks is Methodis', held to sprinklin' an' sech; however, for myse'f, I never banks none on them technicalities. It's deeds that counts with Omnipotence, same as with a vig'lance committee; an', whether a gent is sprinkled or dipped or is as averse to water as Huggins or Old Monte, wont settle whether he wins out a harp or a hot pitchfork in the eternal beyond.

"No, I ain't a believer in that enthoosiastic sense that fights its way to the mourner's bench an' manifests itse'f with groans that daunts hoot-owls into silence. Thar don't appear many preachers out West in my day. Now an' then one of these yere divines, who's got strayed or drifted from his proper range, comes buttin' his way into Wolfville an' puts us up a sermon, or a talkee-talkee. In sech

events we allers listens respectful, an' when the contreebution box shows down, we stakes 'em on their windin' way; but it's all as much for the name of the camp as any belief in them ministrations doin' local good. Shore! these yere sky-scouts is all right at that. But Wolfville's a hard, practical outfit, what you might call a heap obdurate, an' it's goin' to take more than them fitful an' o'casional sermons I alloodes to, a hour long an' more'n three months apart on a av'rage, to reach the roots of its soul. When I looks back on Peets an' Enright, an' Boggs an' Tutt, an' Texas Thompson an' Moore, an' Cherokee, to say nothin' of Colonel Sterett, an' recalls their nacheral obstinacy, an' the cheerful conceit wherewith they adheres to their systems of existence, I realizes that them ordinary, every-day pulpit utterances of the sort that saves an' satisfies the East, would have about as much ser'ous effect on them cimmaron pards of mine as throwin' water on a drowned rat. Which they lives irreg'lar, an' they're doo to die irreg'lar, an' if they can't be admitted to the promised land irreg'lar, they're shore destined to pitch camp outside. An' inasmuch as I onderstands them aforetime comrades of mine, an' saveys an' esteems their ways, why, I reckons I'll string my game with theirs a whole lot, an' get in or get barred with Wolfville.

"No; I've no notion at all ag'inst a gospel spreader. When Short Creek Dave gets religion over in Tucson, an' descends on us as a exhorter,

although I only knows Short Creek thartofore as the coldest poker sharp that ever catches a gent bluffin' on a 4-flush, I hesitates not, but encourages an' caps his game. But I can't say that the sight of a preacher-gent affords me peace. A preacher frets me; not for himse'f exactly, but you never sees preachers without seein' p'lice folks—preachers an' p'lice go hand in hand, like prairie dogs an' rattlesnakes—an' born as I be in Tennessee, where we has our feuds an' where law is a interference an' never a protection, I'm nacherally loathin' constables complete.

"But if I ain't religious," he rambled on while he puffed at his Bull Durham vigorously, "you can resk a small stack that neither I ain't sooperstitious. Take Boggs an' Cherokee, you-all recalls how long ago I tells you how sooperstitious them two is. Speakin' of Boggs, who's as good a gent an' as troo a friend as ever touches your glass; he's sooperstitious from his wrought-steel spurs to his bullion hatband. Boggs has more signs an' omens than some folks has money; everything is a tip or a hunch to Boggs; an' he lives surrounded by inflooences.

"Thar's a peaked old sport named Ryder pervades Wolfville for a while. He's surly an' gnurlly an' omeny, Ryder is; an' has one of them awful lookin' faces where the feachers is all c'llected in the middle of his visage, an' bunched up like they's afraid of Injuns or somethin' else that threatenin' an' hostile—them sort of countenances you notes

carved on the far ends of fiddles. We-all is averse to Ryder. An' this yere Ryder himse'f is that contentious an' contradictory he won't agree to nothin'. Jest to show you about Ryder: I has in mind once when a passel of us is lookin' at a paper that's come floatin' in from the States. Thar's the picture of a cow-puncher into it who's a dead ringer for Dave Tutt. From y'ears to hocks that picture is Tutt; an' thar we-all be admirin' the likeness an' takin' our licker conjunctive. While thus spec'-latin' on them resemblances, this yere sour old maverick, Ryder, shows up at the bar for nourishment.

"'Don't tell Ryder about how this yere deelineation looks like Tutt,' says Doc Peets; 'I'll saw it off on him raw for his views, and ask him whatever does he think himse'f.

"'See yere, Ryder,' says Peets, shovin' the paper onder the old t'rant'ler's nose as he sets down his glass, 'whoever does this picture put you in mind of? Does it look like any sport you knows?'

"'No,' says Ryder, takin' the paper an' puttin' on his specks, an' at the same time as thankless after his nose-paint as if he'd been refoosed the beverage; 'no, it don't put me in mind of nothin' nor nobody. One thing shore, an' you-all hold-ups can rope onto that for a fact, it don't remind me none of Dave Tutt.'

"Which Boggs, who, as I says, is allers herdin' ghosts, is sooperstitious about old Ryder. That's straight; Boggs won't put down a bet while this Ryder person's in sight. I've beheld Boggs, jest as he's

got his chips placed, look up an' c'llect a glimpse of them fiddle-feachers of Ryder.

"'Whoop!' says Boggs to Cherokee, who would be behind the box, an' spreadin' his hands in ree-monstrance; 'nothin' goes!' An' then Boggs would glare at this Ryder party ontil he'd fade from the room.

"He's timid of Boggs, too, this yere Ryder is; an' as much as ever it's this horror of Boggs which prevails on him to shift his blankets to Red Dog—the same bein' a low-down plaza inhabited by drunkards an' Mexicans, in proportions about a even break of each, an' which assoomes in its delirium treemors way to be a rival of Wolfville.

"'Which I'm a public benefactor,' says Boggs, when he's informed that he's done froze this Ryder out of camp, 'an' if you sports a'preciates me at my troo valyoo, you-all would proffer me some sech memento mebby as a silver tea-set. Me makin' this Ryder *vamos* is the greatest public improvement Wolfville's experienced since the lynchin' of B'ar Creek Stanton. You-all ain't s'fficiently on the quee vee, as they says in French, to be aware of the m'lignant atmospheres of this yere Ryder. He'd hoodoo a hill, or a pine-tree, Ryder would, let alone anythin' as onstable as my methods of buckin' faro-bank. Gone to Red Dog, has he? *Bueno!* He leaves us an' attaches himse'f to our enemies. I'll bet a pinto hoss that somethin' happens to them Red Dog tarrapins inside of a week.'

"An', son, while said riotous prophecies of Boggs don't impress me a little bit, I'm bound to admit that the second night followin' the heegira of this yere Ryder, an' his advent that a-way into Red Dog, a outcast from the Floridas, who goes locoed as the frootes of a week of Red Dog gayety, sets fire to the sityooation while shootin' out the dance-hall lamps, an' burns up half Red Dog, with the dance hall an' the only two s'loons in the outfit; tharby incloodin' every drop of whiskey in the holycaust. It was awful! Which, of course, we comes to the rescoo. Red Dog's our foe; but thar be c'lamities, son, which leaves no room in the hooman heart for anythin' but pity. An' this is one. Wolfville rolls out the needed nose-paint for Red Dog, desolated as I says, an' holds the fraternal glass to the Red Dog lips till its freighters brings relief from Tucson.

"All the same, while as I assures you thar's nothin' sooperstitious about me, I can't he'p, when Red Dog burns that a-way, but think of them bluffs of Boggs about this yere old Ryder party bein' a hoodoo. Shore! it confirms Boggs in them weaknesses. An' he even waxes puffed up an' puts on dog about it; an' if ever thar's a dispoote about one of his omens —an' thar's a lot from time to time, because Boggs is plumb reedic'lous as to 'em—he ups an' staggers the camp by demandin', 'Don't I call the turn that time when Ryder goes retreatin' over to Red Dog? If I don't, I'll turn Chink an' open a laundry.'

"Speakin' of omens, of course thar be some, as

I tell you yeretofore in that Wolfville book you've done printed, so common an' practical every gent must yield to 'em. Thar's places where mere sooperstition gets up from the table, an' mule-sense takes its seat. If I meets a gent evolvin' outcries of glee, an' walkin' on both sides of the street, an' most likely emptyin' a Colt's pistol at the firmament, an' all without obv'ous cause, I dedooces the presence in that gent's interior of a lib'ral freight of nose-paint. If, as I'm proceedin' about my destinies, I hears the voice of a gun, I argues the existence of a weepon in my vicinity. If the lead tharfrom cuts my saddle-horn, or creases my pony, or plugs a double hole in my sombrero, or some sech little play, I flies to a theery that the knight errant who's back of the racket means me, onlimbers my field piece, an' enters into the sperit of the eepisode. Which I gives you this in almost them very words before. Still, signs an' omens in what Doc Peets would term their 'occultisms,' I passes up. I wouldn't live in them apprehensions that beleaguers Boggs for a full herd of three-year-olds.

"Which I'll never forget them eloocidations Enright onfolds on Boggs one evenin' about the mournin' an' the howlin' of some hound-dogs that's been sendin' thrills through Boggs. It's when some outfit of mountebanks is givin' a show called 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' over to Huggins' Bird Cage Op'ry House, an' these yere saddenin' canines—big, lop-y'eared hound-dogs, they be—works in the piece.

"'Do you-all hear them hound-dogs a-mournin' an' a-bayin' last evenin'?' asked Boggs of Enright.

"'Shore! I hears 'em,' says Enright.

"Enright, that a-way, is allers combatin' of Boggs' sooperstitions. As he says, if somebody don't head Boggs off, them deloosions spreads, an' the first news you gets, Wolfville's holdin' table-tippin's an' is goin' all spraddled out on seances an' sim'lar imbecilities, same as them sperit-rappin' hold-ups one encounters in the East. In sech event, Red Dog's doo to deem us locoed, an' could treat us with jestified disdain. Enright don't aim to allow Wolfville's good repoote to bog down to any sech extent, none whatever; an' so stands in to protect both the camp an' pore Boggs himse'f from Boggs' weird an' ranikaboo idees. So Enright says ag'in: 'Shore! I hears 'em. An' what of it? Can't you-all let a pore pup howl, when his heart is low an' his destinies most likely has got tangled in their rope?'

"'Jest the same,' says Boggs, 'them outcries of theirs makes me feel a heap ambiguous. I'm drawin' kyards to a pa'r of fours that first howl they emits, an' I smells bad luck an' thinks to myse'f, "Here's where you get killed too dead to skin!" But as I takes in three aces, an' as the harvest tharof is crowdin' hard towards two hundred dollars, I concloodes, final, them dogs don't have me on their mind after all; an' so I'm appeased a whole lot. Still, I'm cur'ous to know whatever they're howlin' about anyhow.'

"'Which you're too conceited, Boggs,' says Tutt,

cuttin' in on the powwow. 'You-all is allers thinkin' everythin' means you. Now, I hears them dogs howlin', an' havin' beheld the spectacle they performs in, I sort o' allows they're sorrowin' over their disgraceful employment—sort o' 'shamed of their game. An' well them dogs might be bowed in sperit! for a more mendacious an' lyin' meelodramy than said "Uncle Tom's Cabin," I never yet pays four white chips to see; an' I'm from Illinoy, an' was a Abe Lincoln man an' a rank black ab'litionist besides.'

"'Seein' I once owns a couple of hundred Guineas,' says Enright, 'my feelin's ag'in slavery never mounts so high as Tutt's; but as for eloocidatin' them dog-songs that's set your nerves to millin', Boggs, it's easy. Whenever you-all hears a dog mournin' an' howlin' like them hound-pups does last night, that's because he smells somethin' he can't locate; an' nacherally he's agitated tharby. Now yereafter, never let your imagination pull its picket-pin that a-way, an' go to cavortin' 'round permiscus—don't go romancin' off on any of them ghost round-ups you're addicted to. Thar's the whole groosome myst'ry laid b'ar; them pups merely smells things they can't locate, an' it frets 'em.'

"'None the less,' remarks Cherokee Hall, 'while I reckons Enright gives us the c'rrect line on dogs that gets audible that a-way, an' onravels them howls in all their meanin's, I confesses I'm a heap like Boggs about signs. Mebby, as I says prior, it's because I'm a kyard sharp an' allers faces my footure over a

faro layout. Anyhow, signs an' omens presses on me. For one thing, I'm sooperstitious about makin' of onyoosal arrangements to protect my play. I never yet tries to cinch a play, an' never notes anybody else try, but we-all quits loser. It ain't no use. Every gent, from his cradle to his coffin, has got to take a gambler's chance. Life is like stud-poker; an' Destiny's got an ace buried every time. It either out-lucks you or out-plays you whenever it's so inclined; an' it seems allers so inclined, Destiny does, jest as you're flatterin' yourse'f you've got a shore thing. A gent's bound to play fa'r with Destiny; he can put a bet down on that. You can't hold six kyards; you can't deal double; you can't play no cold hands; you can't bluff Destiny. All you-all can do is humbly an' meekly pick up the five kyards that belongs to you, an' in a sperit of thankfulness an' praise, an' frankly admittin' that you're lucky to be allowed to play at all, do your lowly best tharwith. Ain't I right, Doc?' An' Cherokee, lookin' warm an' earnest, turns to Peets.

"'As absolootely right as the sights of a Sharp's rifle,' says Peets; 'an', while I'm not yere to render you giddy with encomiums, Cherokee, you shore ought to expand them sentiments into a lecture.'

"'Jest to 'llustrate my meanin',' resooms Cherokee, 'let me onbosom myse'f as to what happens a party back in Posey County, Injeanny. I'm plumb callow at the time, bein' only about the size an' valyoo of a pa'r of fives, but I'm plenty impressed by them events I'm about to recount, an' the

mem'ry is fresh enough for yesterday. But to come flutterin' from my perch. Thar's a sport who makes his home-camp in that hamlet which fosters my infancy; that is, he's thar about six months in the year. His long suit is playin' the ponies—he can beat the races; an' where he falls down is faro-bank, which never fails to freeze to all the coin he changes in. That's the palin' off his fence; faro-bank. He never does triumph at it onct. An' still the device has him locoed; he can't let it alone. Jest so shorely as he finds a faro-bank, jest so shorely he sets in ag'inst it, an' jest so shorely he ain't got a tail-feather left when he quits.

"'The races is over for the season. It's the first snow of winter on the ground, when our sport comes trailin' in to make his annyooal camp. He's about six thousand dollars strong; for, as I states, he picks hosses right. An' he's been thinkin', too; this yere sport I'm relatin' of. He's been roominatin' the baleful effects of faro-bank in his speshul case. He knows it's no use him sayin' he wont buck the game. This person's made them vows before. An' they holds him about like cobwebs holds a cow—lasts about as long as a drink of whiskey. He's bound, in the very irreg'larities of his nacher, an' the deadly idleness of a winter with nothin' to do but think, to go to transactin' faro-bank. An', as a high-steppin' patriot once says, "jedgin' of the footure by the past," our sport's goin' to be skinned alive—chewed up—compared to him a Digger Injun will loom up in the matter of finance like a Steve

Girard. An' he knows it. Wherefore this yere crafty sharp starts in to cinch a play; starts in to defy fate, an' rope up an' brand the footure, for at least six months to come. An', jest as I argues, Destiny accepts the challenge of this vainglorious sharp; acccepts it with a grin. Yere's what he does, an' yere's what comes to pass.

"'Our wise, forethoughtful sport seeks out the robber who keeps the tavern. "The ponies will be back in May," says he, "an' I'm perishin' of cur'osity to know how much money you demands to feed an' sleep me till then." The tavern man names the bundle, an' the thoughtful sport makes good. Then he stiffens the barkeep for about ten drinks a day ontil the advent of them ponies. Followin' which, he searches out a tailor shop an' accoomulates a lib'ral trousseau, an' has it packed down to the tavern an' filed away in his rooms. "Thar!" he says; "which I reckons now I'm strong enough to go the distance. Not even a brace game of faro-bank, nor yet any sim'lar deadfall, prevails ag'inst me. I flatters myse'f, for onct in a way, I've organized my destinies so that, for six months at least, they've done got to run troo."

"'It's after supper; our sport, who's been so busy all day treein' the chances an' runnin' of 'em out on a limb, is loafin' about the bar. O'casionally he congratulates himse'f on havin' a long head like a mule; then ag'in he oneasily reverts to the faro game that's tossin' an' heavin' with all sorts o' good an' bad luck jest across the street.

"'At first he's plumb inflex'ble that a-way, an' is goin' to deny himse'f to faro-bank. He waxes quite heroic about it, our sport does; a condition of sperits, by the way, I've allers noticed is prone to immejetly precede complete c'llapse.

"'These yere reform thoughts of our sport consoomes a hour. About that time, however, he engages himse'f with the fifth drink of nose-paint. Tharupon faro-bank takes on a different tint. His attitoode towards that amoosement becomes enlarged; at least he decides he'll prance over some an' take a fall out of it for, say, a hundred or so either way, merely to see if his luck's as black as former. An' over capers our sport.

"'It's the same old song by the same old mock-in'-bird. At second drink time followin' midnight our sport is broke. As he gets up an' stretches 'round a whole lot in a half-disgusted way, he still can't he'p exultin' on how plumb cunnin' he's been. "I don't say this in any sperit of derision," he remarks to the dealer he's been settin' opp'site to for eight hours, an' who manoovers his fiscal overthrow, as aforesaid, "an' shorely with no intent to mortify a wolf like you-all, who's as remorseless as he's game, but I foresees this racket an' insures for its defeat. You figgers you've downed me. Mebby so. All the same, I've got my game staked out so that I eats, drinks, sleeps, an' wears clothes till the comin' of them ponies; an' you, an' the angels above, an' the demons down onder the sea, is powerless to put a crimp in them calc'lations.

I've got the next six months pris'ner; I've turned the keys onto 'em same as if they're in a calaboose. An' no power can rescoo 'em none; an' they can't break jail."

"'An' jest to show you-all,' continyoos Cherokee, after pausin' to tip the bottle for a spoonful, as well as let the sityooation sort o' trickle into us in all its outlines—Cherokee is plenty graphic that a-way, an' knows how to frame up them recitals so they takes effect—'an' jest to show you, as I remarks former, that every gent is bound to take a gambler's chance an' that shore-things don't exist, let me ask you what happens? Our confident sport ain't hardly got that bluff hung up before—"Inglegojang! inglegojang!" goes the church bell in alarm; the tavern's took fire an' burns plumb to the ground; drinks, chuck, bed, raiment, the whole bunch of tricks; an' thar's our wise sport out in the snow an' nothin' but a black ruck of smokin' ruins to remind him of that cinch of his.

"'It's a lesson to him, though. As he stands thar meditatin' on the expectedness of the onexpected, he observes to himse'f, "Providence, if so minded, can beat a royal flush; an' any gent holdin' contrary views is a liar, amen!"'

"'Good, Cherokee!' says Texas Thompson, as Cherokee comes to a halt; 'I'm yere to observe you're a mighty excellent racontoor. Yere's lookin' at you!' an' Thompson raises his glass.

"'I catches your eye,' says Cherokee, a heap pleased, as he p'litely caroms his glass ag'in Thompson's.

"'But Cherokee,' whispers Faro Nell, from where she's clost by his side, 'if thar's somethin' I desires a whole lot, an' is doin' my level best to deserve an' keep it all my life, do you-all reckon now that Providence ups an' throws me down?'

"'Not you, Nell,' says Cherokee, as he smiles on Faro Nell, an' kind o' surreptitious pats her ha'r; 'not you. Providence guides your game an' guarantees it. I'm only discussin' of men. It's one of the best things about both Providence an' woman, an' to the credit of all concerned, that they allers agrees—allers goes hand in hand.'

"'An' that last utterance is a fact,' observes Dave Tutt, who's been interested deep. 'When I first weds Tucson Jennie that time, I doubts them tenets. That's over a year ago, an' you bet I'm settin' yere to-day in possession of a new faith. It takes time to teach me, but I now sees that Tucson Jennie's the onfalterin' mouth-piece of eternal trooth; the full partner of Providence, a-holdin' down the post of lookout; an' that when she sets forth things, them things is decreed an' foreordained.'"

And now my friend lapsed into silence and began to reload his pipe. "I used to smoke Lone Jack out on the plains," he murmured, "or mebby Frootes an' Flowers; but I don't know! I figgers this yere Bull Durham's got more force of char'cter."

Then came more silence. But the night was young; I was disposed to hear further of Wolfville

and its worthy citizens. My readiest method was to put forth a question.

"But how about yourself?" I asked. "Do you, like Hall and Boggs, believe that Heaven especially interferes with the plans of man; or that a challenge, direct or otherwise, to the Powers Above, is liable to earn reply?"

"I states ag'in," he retorted, puffing a calmative cloud the while, "I states ag'in: Thar's no sooperstition ridin' the ranges of my breast. Yet I sees enough in a long an' more or less eventful life—not to say an ill-employed life—to know that Providence packs a gun; an', as more than one scoffer finds out, she don't go heeled for fun. Thar's that Gene Watkins, who gets killed by lightnin' over by the Eagle Claw that time; downed for blasphemin', he is."

"Let me hear about this Watkins," I urged; "no one is more interested in the doings of Providence than I."

"Which from what little I notes of you," he observed, regarding me with a glance of dubious, sour suspicion, "you-all shore ought to be. An' I'll tell you one thing: If Providence ever gets wearied of the way you acts—an' it ain't none onlikely—you might as well set in your chips an' quit.

"But as to this yere Watkins: I don't know about the wisdom of burdenin' you with Watkins. It's gettin' plenty late, an' I'm some fatigued myse'f; I must be organizin' to bed myse'f down a lot for the night. I ain't so cap'ble of sleeplessness as

I am 'way back yonder in the years when I'm workin' cattle along the old Jones an' Plummer trail. However, it won't take long, this Watkins killin'; an' seein' my moods is in the saddle that a-way, I may as well let you have it. This yere ain't a story exackly; it's more like a aneckdote; but it allers strikes me as sheddin' a ray on them speshul Providences.

"This Watkins is a mere yooth; he jumps into Wolfville from the Texas Panhandle, where, it's rumored, he's been over free with a gun. However, that don't bother us a bit. Arizona conducts herse'f on the principle of everybody ridin' his own sign-camps, an' she ain't roundin' up escaped felons for no commoonity but herse'f.

"The first time I sees this Watkins party is one evenin' when he sa'nters down the middle aisle of the Bird Cage Op'ry House, with his lariat in his hands, an' tosses the loop over a lady who's jest then renderin' that good old hymn:

> "In the days of old, the days of gold,
> The days of forty-nine!

"It's mighty discouragin', this Watkins breakin' in on them melodies. It's more than discouragin', it's scand'lous. The loop is a bit big, an' falls cl'ar down an' fastens to this cantatrice by the fetlocks. An' then this locoed Watkins turns loose to pull her over the footlights. Which the worst is, havin' her by the heels, an' she settin' down that a-way, he pulls that lady over the footlights the wrong way.

"It's at this epock, Jack Moore, who in his capac-'ty of marshal is domineerin' about down in front, whacks Watkins over the head with his six-shooter, an' the lady's saved.

"'What be you-all tryin' to do with this diva?' demands Moore of the Watkins party.

"'Which I'm enamored of her,' says this yere Watkins, 'an' thar's a heap of things I was aimin' to pour into her y'ears. But now you've done pounded me on top with that gun, they all gets jolted out of my mind.'

"'Jest the same,' says Moore, 'if I was you, I'd take the saddle off my emotions, an' hobble 'em out to rest some. Meanwhile I'd think up a new system. You-all lacks reticence; also you're a heap too much disposed to keep yourse'f in the public eye. I don't know how it is in Texas, but yere in Arizona a gent who gets too cel'brated gets shot. Also, I might add in concloosion that your Panhandle notions of a good way to get confidenshul with a lady don't obtain none yere—they don't go. An' so I warns you, never express your feelin's with a lariat in this theayter no more. Wolfville yields leeniency to ign'rance once, but never ag'in.'

"But, as I'm sayin'; about this Watkins over on the Eagle Claw: Thar's a half-dozen of us— a floatin' outfit we be, ridin' the range, pickin' up what calves misses the spring brandin'—an' we're bringin' along mebby three hundred cows an' half-grown calves, an' headin' for the bar-B-eight—that's Enright's brand—corral to mark the calves. It's

late in August, jest at the beginnin' of the rains. Thar's a storm, an' everybody's in the saddle, plumb down to the cook, tryin' to hold the bunch. It's flash on flash of lightnin'; an' thunder followin' on the heels of thunder-clap. As we-all is cirklin' the little herd, an' singin' to 'em to restore their reason with sounds they saveys, thar comes a most inord'-nate flash of lightnin', an' a crash of thunder like a mountain fallin'; it sort o' stands us up on our hocks. It makes the pore cattle bat their eyes, an' almost knocks their horns off.

"Thar's a moment of silence followin'; an' then this yere ontamed Watkins, tossin' his hand at the sky, shouts out:

"'Blaze away! my gray-head creator! You-all has been shootin' at me for twenty years; you ain't hit me yet!'

"Watkins is close to Boggs when he cuts loose this yere defiance; an' it simply scares Boggs cold! He's afraid he'll get picked off along with Watkins. Boggs, in his frenzy, pulls his six-shooter, an' goes to dictatin' with it towards Watkins.

"'Pull your freight,' roars Boggs; 'don't you stay near me none. Get, or I'll give you every load in the gun.'

"This Watkins person spurs his cayouse away; at the same time he's laughin' at Boggs, deemin' his terrors that a-way as reedic'lous. As he does, a streak of white fire comes down, straight as a blazin' arrer, an' with it sech a whirl of thunder, which I thought the earth had split! An' it shorely runs the devil's brand on Watkins.

"When we recovers, thar he lies; dead—an' his pony dead with him. An' he must have got the limit; for, son, the very rowels of his spurs is melted. Right in the middle of his leather hat-band, where it covers his fore'ead, thar's burned a hole about the size of a 44-calibre bullet; that's where the bolt goes in. I remembers, as we gathers 'round, how Boggs picks up the hat. It's stopped rainin' of a sudden, an' the stars is showin' two or three, where the clouds is partin' away. Boggs stands thar lookin' first at the sky, an' then at the hat where the hole is. Then he shakes his head. 'She's a long shot, but a center one,' says Boggs."

CHAPTER XVI.

Colonel Sterett's War Record.

IT had been dark and overcast as to skies; the weather, however, was found serene and balmy enough. As I climbed the steps after my afternoon canter, I encountered the Old Cattleman. He was re-locating one of the big veranda chairs more to his comfort, and the better to enjoy his tobacco. He gave me a glance as I came up.

"Them's mighty puny spurs," he observed with an eye of half commiseration, half disdain; "them's shore reedic'lous. Which they'd destroy your standin' with a cow pony, utter. He'd fill up with contempt for you like a water-hole in April. Shore! it's the rowels; they oughter be about the size an' shape of a mornin' star, them rowels had. Then a gent might hope for action. An' whyever don't you-all wear leather chapps that a-way, instead of them jimcrow boots an' trousers? They're plumb amoosin', them garments be. No, I onderstands; you don't go chargin' about in the bresh an' don't need chapps, but still you oughter don 'em for the looks. Thar's a wrong an' a right way to do; an' chapps is right. Thar's Johnny Cook of the Turkey Track; he's like you; he contemns chapps. Johnny charges into a wire fence

one midnight, sort o' sidles into said boundary full surge; after that Johnny wears chapps all right. Does it hurt him? Son, them wires t'ars enough hide off Johnny, from some'ers about the hock, to make a saddle cover, an' he loses blood sufficient to paint a house. He comes mighty near goin' shy a laig on the deal. It's a lesson on c'rrect costumes that Johnny don't soon forget.

"No, I never rides a hoss none now. These yere Eastern saddles ain't the right model. Which they's a heap too low in the cantle an' too low in the horn. An' them stirrup leathers is too short, an' two inches too far for'ard. I never does grade over-high for ridin' a hoss, even at my best. No, I don't get pitched off more'n is comin' to me; still, I ain't p'inted out to tenderfeet as no 'Centaur' as Doc Peets calls 'em. I gets along without buckin' straps, an' my friends don't have to tie no roll of blankets across my saddle-horn, an' that's about the best I can report.

"Texas Thompson most likely is the chief equestr'an of Wolfville. One time Texas makes a wager of a gallon of licker with Jack Moore, an' son! yere's what Texas does. I sees him with these eyes. Texas takes his rope an' ties down a bronco; one the record whereof is that he's that toomultuous no one can ride him. Most gents would have ducked at the name of this yere steed, the same bein' 'Dynamite.' But Texas makes the bet I mentions, an' lays for this onrooly cayouse with all the confidence of virgin gold that a-way.

"Texas ropes an' ties him down an' cinches the saddle onto him while he's layin' thar; Tutt kneelin' on his locoed head doorin' the ceremony. Then Tutt throws him loose; an' when he gets up he nacherally rises with Texas Thompson on his back.

"First, that bronco stands in a daze, an' Texas takes advantage of his trance to lay two silver dollars on the saddle, one onder each of his laigs. An' final, you should shorely have beheld that bronco put his nose between his laigs an' arch himse'f an' buck! Reg'lar worm-fence buckin' it is; an' when he ain't hittin' the ground, he's shore abundant in that atmosphere a lot.

"In the midst of these yere flights, which the same is enough to stim'late the imagination of a Apache, Texas, as ca'm an' onmoved as the Spanish Peaks, rolls an' lights a cigarette. Then he picks up the bridle an' gives that roysterin' bronco jest enough of the Mexican bit to fill his mouth with blood an' his mind with doubts, an' stops him. When Texas swings to the ground, them two silver dollars comes jinglin' along; which he holds 'em to the saddle that a-way throughout them exercises. It's them dollars an' the cigarette that raises the licker issue between Jack an' Texas; an' of course, Texas quits winner for the nose-paint."

I had settled by this time into a chair convenient to my reminiscent companion, and relishing the restful ease after a twenty-mile run, decided to prolong the talk. Feeling for subjects, I became tentatively curious concerning politics.

"Cow people," said my friend, "never saveys pol'tics. I wouldn't give a Mexican sheep—which is the thing of lowest valyoo I knows of except Mexicans themse'fs—for the views of any cow-puncher on them questions of state. You can gamble an' make the roof the limit, them opinions, when you-all once gets 'em rounded up, would be shore loodicrous, not to say footile.

"Now, we-all wolves of Wolfville used to let Colonel Sterett do our polit'cal yelpin' for us; sort o' took his word for p'sition an' stood pat tharon. It's in the Red Light the very evenin' when Texas subdoos that bronco, an' lets the whey outen Jack Moore to the extent of said jug of Valley Tan, that Colonel Sterett goes off at a round road-gait on this yere very topic of pol'tics, an' winds up by tellin' us of his attitood, personal, doorin' the civil war, an' the debt he owes some Gen'ral named Wheeler for savin' of his life.

"'Pol'tics,' remarks Colonel Sterett on that o'casion, re-fillin' his glass for the severaleth time, 'jest nacherally oozes from a editor, as you-all who reads reg'larly the *Coyote* b'ars witness; he's saturated with pol'tics same as Huggins is with whiskey. As for myse'f, aside from my vocations of them tripods, pol'tics is inborn in me. I gets 'em from my grandfather, as tall a sport an' as high-rollin' a statesman as ever packs a bowie or wins the beef at a shootin' match in old Kaintucky. Yes, sir,' says the Colonel, an' thar's a pensive look in his eyes like he's countin' up that ancestor's merits in his

mem'ry; 'pol'tics with me that-away is shore congenital.'

"'Congenital!' says Dan Boggs, an' his tones is a heap satisfact'ry; 'an' thar's a word that's good enough for a dog. I reckons I'll tie it down an' brand it into my bunch right yere.'

"'My grandfather,' goes on the Colonel, 'is a Jackson man; from the top of the deck plumb down to the hock kyard, he's nothin' but Jackson. This yere attitood of my grandsire, an' him camped in the swarmin' midst of a Henry Clay country, is frootful of adventures an' calls for plenty nerve. But the old Spartan goes through.

"'Often as a child, that old gent has done took me on his knee an' told me how he meets up first with Gen'ral Jackson. He's goin' down the river in one of them little old steamboats of that day, an' the boat is shore crowded. My grandfather has to sleep on the floor, as any more in the bunks would mean a struggle for life an' death. Thar's plenty of bunkless gents, however, besides him, an' as he sinks into them sound an' dreamless slumbers which is the her'tage of folks whose consciences run troo, he hears 'em drinkin' an' talkin' an' barterin' mendacity, an' argyfyin' pol'tics on all sides.

"'My grandfather sleeps on for hours, an' is only aroused from them torpors, final, by some sport chunkin' him a thump in the back. The old lion is sleepin' on his face, that a-way, an' when he gets mauled like I relates, he wakes up an' goes to struggle to his feet.

"'"B'ars an' buffaloes!" says my grandfather; "whatever's that?"

"'"Lay still, stranger," says the party who smites him; "I've only got two to go."

"'That's what it is. It's a couple of gents playin' seven-up; an' bein' crowded, they yootilizes my grandfather for a table. This sport is swingin' the ace for the opp'site party's jack, an' he boards his kyard with that enthoosiasm it comes mighty clost to dislocatin' my old gent's shoulder. But he's the last Kaintuckian to go interferin' with the reecreations of others, so he lays thar still an' prone till the hand's played out.

"'"High, jack, game!" says the stranger, countin' up; "that puts me out an' one over for lannyap."

"'This yere seven-up gent turns out to be Gen'ral Jackson, an' him an' my grandfather camps down in a corner, drinks up the quart of Cincinnati Rectified which is the stakes, an' becomes mootually acquainted. An', gents, I says it with pride, the hero of the Hoss-shoe, an' the walloper of them English at New Orleans takes to my grandfather like a honeysuckle to a front porch.

"'My grandfather comes plenty near forfeitin' them good opinions of the Gen'ral, though. It's the next day, an' that ancestor of mine an' the Gen'ral is recoverin' themse'fs from the conversation of the night before with a glass or two of tanzy bitters, when a lady, who descends on the boat at Madison, comes bulgin' into the gents' cabin. The captain an' two or three of the boat's folks tries to

herd her into the women's cabin; but she withers 'em with a look, breshes 'em aside, an' stampedes along in among the men-people like I explains. About forty of 'em's smokin'; an' as tobacco is a fav'rite weakness of the tribe of Sterett, my grandfather is smokin' too.

"'"I wants you-all to make these yere miscreants stop smokin'," says the lady to the captain, who follows along thinkin' mebby he gets her headed right after she's had her run out an' tires down some. "You're the captain of this tub," says the lady, "an' I demands my rights. Make these barb'rous miscreants stop smokin', or I leaves the boat ag'in right yere."

"'The lady's plumb fierce, an' her face, which is stern an' heroic, carries a capac'ty for trouble lurkin' 'round in it, same as one of them bald hornet's nests on a beech limb. Nacherally my grandfather's gaze gets riveted on this lady a whole lot, his pipe hangin' forgetful from his lips. The lady's eyes all at once comes down on my grandfather, partic'lar an' personal, like a milk-crock from a high shelf.

"'"An' I means you speshul," says the lady, p'intin' the finger of scorn at my grandfather. "The idee of you standin' thar smokin' in my very face, an' me a totterin' invalid. It shorely shows you ain't nothin' but a brute. If I was your wife I'd give you p'isen."

"'"Which if you was my wife, I'd shore take it," says my grandfather; for them epithets spurs him on the raw, an' he forgets he's a gent, that a-way,

an' lets fly this yere retort before he can give himself the curb.

"'The moment my grandfather makes them observations, the lady catches her face—which as I tells you is a cross between a gridiron an' a steel trap—with both her hands, shakes her ha'r down her back, an' cuts loose a scream which, like a b'ar in a hawg-pen, carries all before it. Then she falls into the captain's arms an' orders him to pack her out on deck where she can faint.

"'"Whatever be you-all insultin' this yere lady for?" says a passenger, turnin' on my grandfather like a crate of wildcats. "Which I'm the Roarin' Wolverine of Smoky Bottoms, an' I waits for a reply."

"'My grandfather is standin' thar some confoosed an' wrought up, an' as warm as a wolf, thinkin' how ornery he's been by gettin' acrid with that lady. The way he feels, this yere Roarin' Wolverine party comes for'ard as a boon. The old gent simply falls upon him, jaw an' claw, an' goes to smashin' furniture an' fixin's with him.

"'The Roarin' Wolverine allows after, when him an' my grandfather drinks a toddy an' compares notes, while a jack-laig doctor who's aboard sews the Roarin' Wolverine's y'ear back on, that he thinks at the time it's the boat blowin' up.

"'"She's shore the vividest skrimmage I ever partic'pates in," says the Roarin' Wolverine; "an' the busiest. I wouldn't have missed it for a small clay farm."

"'But Gen'ral Jackson when he comes back from offerin' condolences to the lady, looks dignified an' shakes his head a heap grave.

"'"Them contoomelious remarks to the lady," he says to my grandfather, "lowers you in my esteem a lot. An' while the way you breaks up that settee with the Roarin' Wolverine goes some towards re-establishin' you, still I shall not look on you as the gent I takes you for, ontil you seeks this yere injured female an' crawfishes on that p'isen-takin' bluff."

"'So my grandfather goes out on deck where the lady is still sobbin' an' hangin' on the captain's neck like the loop of a rope, an' apol'gizes. Then the lady takes a brace, accepts them contritions, an' puts it up for her part that she can see my grandfather's a shore-enough gent an' a son of chivalry; an' with that the riot winds up plumb pleasant all 'round.'

"'If I may come romancin' in yere,' says Doc Peets, sort o' breakin' into the play at this p'int, 'with a interruption, I wants to say that I regyards this as a very pretty narratif, an' requests the drinks onct to the Colonel's grandfather.' We drinks accordin', an' the Colonel resoomes.

"'My grandfather comes back from this yere expedition down the Ohio a most voylent Jackson man. An' he's troo to his faith as a adherent to Jackson through times when the Clay folks gets that intemp'rate they hunts 'em with dogs. The old gent was wont, as I su'gests, to regale my

childish y'ears with the story of what he suffers. He tells how he goes pirootin' off among the farmers in the back counties; sleepin' on husk beds, till the bed-ropes cuts plumb through an' marks out a checker-board on his frame that would stay for months. Once he's sleepin' in a loft, an' all of a sudden about daybreak the old gent hears a squall that mighty near locoes him, it's so clost an' turrible. He boils out on the floor an' begins to claw on his duds, allowin', bein' he's only half awake that a-way, that it's a passel of them murderin' Clay Whigs who's come to crawl his hump for shore. But she's a false alarm. It's only a Dom'nick rooster who's been perched all night on my grandfather's wrist where his arm sticks outen bed, an' who's done crowed a whole lot, as is his habit when he glints the comin' day. It's them sort o' things that sends a shudder through you, an' shows what that old patriot suffers for his faith.

"'But my grandfather keeps on prevailin' along in them views ontil he jest conquers his county an' carries her for Jackson. Shore! he has trouble at the polls, an' trouble in the conventions. But he persists; an' he's that domineerin' an' dogmatic they at last not only gives him his way, but comes rackin' along with him. In the last convention, he nacherally herds things into a corner, an' thar's only forty votes ag'in him at the finish. My grandfather allers says when relatin' of it to me long afterwards:

"'"An' grandson Willyum, five gallons more of

rum would have made that convention yoonanimous."

"'But what he'ps the old gent most towards the last, is a j'int debate he has with Spence Witherspoon, which begins with reecrim'nations an' winds up with the guns. Also, it leaves this yere aggravatin' Witherspoon less a whole lot.

"'"Wasn't you-all for nullification, an' ain't you now for Jackson an' the union?" asks this yere insultin' Witherspoon. "Didn't you make a Calhoun speech over on Mink Run two years ago, an' ain't you at this barbecue, to-day, consoomin' burgoo an' shoutin' for Old Hickory?"

"'"What you-all states is troo," says my grandfather. "But my party turns, an' I turns with it. You-all can't lose Jack Sterett. He can turn so quick the heels of his moccasins will be in front."

"'"Which them talents of yours for change," says Witherspoon, "reminds me a powerful lot of the story of how Jedge Chinn gives Bill Hatfield, the blacksmith, that Berkshire suckin' pig."

"'"An' whatever is that story?" asks my grandfather, beginnin' to loosen his bowie-knife in its sheath.

"'"Take your paws off that old butcher of your'n," returns this pesterin' Witherspoon, "an' I'll tell the story. But you've got to quit triflin' with that 'leven-inch knife ontil I'm plumb through, or I'll fool you up a lot an' jest won't tell it."

"'Tharupon my grandfather takes his hand offen the knife-haft, an' Witherspoon branches forth:

"'"When I recalls how this oncompromisin' outlaw," p'intin' to my grandfather, "talks for Calhoun an' nullification over on Mink Run, an' to-day is yere shoutin' in a rum-sodden way for the union an' Andy Jackson, as I observes yeretofore, it shore reminds me of the story of how Jedge Chinn give Bill Hatfield that Berkshire shoat. 'Send over one of your niggers with a basket an' let him get one, Bill,' says Jedge Chinn, who's been tellin' Hatfield about the pigs. Next day, Bill mounts his nigger boy, Dick, on a mule, with a basket on his arm, an' Dick lines out for Jedge Chinn's for to fetch away that little hawg. Dick puts him in the basket, climbs onto his mule, an' goes teeterin' out for home. On the way back, Dick stops at Hickman's tavern. While he's pourin' in a gill of corn jooce, a wag who's present subtracts the pig an' puts in one of old Hickman's black Noofoundland pups. When Dick gets home to Bill Hatfield's, Bill takes one look at the pup, breaks the big rasp on Dick's head, throws the forehammer at him, an' bids him go back to Jedge Chinn an' tell him that he, Bill, will sally over the first dull day an' p'isen his cattle an' burn his barns. Dick takes the basket full of dog on his arm, an' goes p'intin' for Jedge Chinn. Nacherally, Dick stops at Hickman's tavern so as to mollify his feelin's with that red-eye. This yere wag gets in ag'in on the play, subtracts the pup an' restores the little hawg a whole lot. When Dick gets to Jedge Chinn, he onfolds to the Jedge touchin' them trans-

formations from pig to pup. 'Pshaw!' says the Jedge, who's one of them pos'tive sharps that no ghost tales is goin' to shake; 'pshaw! Bill Hatfield's gettin' to be a loonatic. I tells him the last time I has my hoss shod that if he keeps on pourin' down that Hickman whiskey, he'll shorely die, an' begin by dyin' at the top. These yere illoosions of his shows I drives the center.' Then the Jedge oncovers the basket an' turns out the little hawg. When nigger Dick sees him, he falls on his knees. 'I'm a chu'ch member, Marse Jedge,' says Dick, 'an' you-all believes what I says. That anamile's conjured, Jedge. I sees him yere an' I sees him thar; an', Jedge, he's either pig or pup, whichever way he likes.'

"'"An', ladies an' gents," concloodes this Witherspoon, makin' a incriminatin' gesture so's to incloode my grandfather that a-way; "when I reflects on this onblushin' turncoat, Jack Sterett, as I states prior, it makes me think of how Jedge Chinn lavishes that Berkshire shoat on blacksmith Bill Hatfield. Confessin' that aforetime he's a nullification pig on Mink Run, he sets yere at this barbecue an' without color of shame declar's himse'f a union pup. Mister Cha'rman, all I can say is, it shore beats squinch owls!"

"'As the story is finished, the trooce which binds my grandfather ends, an' he pulls his bowie-knife an' chases this Witherspoon from the rostrum. He'd had his detractor's skelp right thar, but the cha'rman an' other leadin' sperits interferes, an'

insists on them resentments of my grandfather's findin' the usual channel in their expression. Witherspoon, who's got on a new blanket coat, allows he won't fight none with knives as they cuts an' sp'iles your clothes; he says he prefers rifles an' fifty paces for his. My grandfather, who's the easiest gent to get along with in matters of mere detail, is agree'ble; an' as neither him nor Witherspoon has brought their weepons, the two vice pres'dents, who's goin' to act as seconds—the pres-'dent by mootual consent dealin' the game as referee—rummages about an' borrys a brace of Looeyville rifles from members of the Black B'ar Glee Club—they're the barytone an' tenor—an' my grandfather an' the scandal-mongerin' Witherspoon is stood up.

"'"Gents," says the pres'dent, "the words will be, 'Fire-one-two-three-stop.' It's incumbent on you-all to blaze away anywhere between the words 'Fire' an' 'Stop'. My partin' injunctions is, 'May heaven defend the right,' an' be shore an' see your hindsights as you onhooks your guns."

"'At the word, my grandfather an' Witherspoon responds prompt an' gay. Witherspoon overshoots, while my grandfather plants his lead in among Witherspoon's idees, an' that racontoor quits Kaintucky for the other world without a murmur.

"'" I regyards this event as a vict'ry for Jackson an' principle," says my grandfather, as he's called on to proceed with his oration, "an' I'd like to say

in that connection, if Henry Clay will count his spoons when he next comes sneakin' home from Washin'ton, he'll find he's short Spence Witherspoon."'

"'Your grandfather's a troo humorist,' says Texas Thompson, as Colonel Sterett pauses in them recitals of his to reach the bottle; 'I looks on that last witticism of his as plumb apt.'

"'My grandfather,' resoomes Colonel Sterett, after bein' refreshed, 'is as full of fun as money-musk, an' when that audience gets onto the joke in its completeness, the merriment is wide an yooniversal. It's the hit of the barbecue; an' in this way, little by little, my grandfather wins his neighbors to his beliefs, ontil he's got the commoonity all stretched an' hawgtied, an' brands her triumphant for Gen'ral Jackson.'

"'An' does your own pap follow in the footprints of his old gent, as a convincin' an' determined statesman that a-way?' asks Doc Peets.

"'No,' says Colonel Sterett, 'my own personal parent simmers down a whole lot compared to my grandfather. He don't take his pol'tics so much to heart; his democracy ain't so virulent an' don't strike in. His only firm stand on questions of state, as I relates the other day, is when he insists on bein' nootral doorin' the late war. I explains how he talks federal an' thinks reb, an' manages, that a-way, to promote a decent average.

"'His nootrality, however, don't incloode the fam'ly none. My brother Jeff—an' I never beholds

a haughtier sperit—goes squanderin' off with Morgan at the first boogle call,'

"'That raid of Morgan's,' says Enright, his eye brightenin', 'is plumb full of dash an' fire.'

"'Shore,' says the Colonel, 'plumb full of dash an' fire. But Jeff tells me of it later, foot by foot, from the time they crosses the river into Injeanny, till they comes squatterin' across at Blennerhasset's Island into Kaintucky ag'in, an' I sadly, though frankly, admits it looks like it possesses some elements of a chicken-stealin' expedition also. Jeff says he never sees so many folks sincere, an' with their minds made up, as him an' Morgan an' the rest of the Bloo Grass chivalry encounters on that croosade. Thar's an uprisin' of the peasantry, Jeff says, wherever they goes; an' them clods pursooes Jeff an' the others, from start to finish, with hoes an' rakes an' mattocks an' clothes-poles an' puddin'-sticks an' other barbarous an' obsolete arms, an' never lets up ontil Jeff an' Morgan an' their gallant comrades is ag'in safe in the arms of their Kaintucky brethren. Their stay in any given spot is trooly brief. That town of Cincinnati makes up a bundle of money big enough to choke a cow to give 'em as a ransom; but Jeff an' Morgan never do hear of it for years. They goes by so plumb swift they don't get notice; an' they fades away in the distance so fast they keeps ahead of the news. However, they gets back to Kaintucky safe an' covered with dust an' glory in even parts; an' as for Jeff speshul, as the harvest of his valor, he reports himse'f the

owner of a one-sixth interest in a sleigh which him an' five of his indomitable companions has done drug across the river on their return. But they don't linger over this trophy; dooty calls 'em, so they stores the sleigh in a barn an' rides away to further honors.

"'We never do hear of Jeff none all through that war but once. After he's j'ined Stonewall Jackson, I recalls how he sends home six hundred dollars in confed'rate money with a letter to my father. It runs like this:

In camp with STONEWALL JACKSON.

Respected Sir:

The slave who bears this will give you from me a treasure of six hundred dollars. I desire that you pay the tavern and whatever creditors of mine you find. To owe debts does not comport with the honor of a cavalier, and I propose to silence all base clamors on that head. I remain, most venerated sir, Yours to command,

JEFFERSON STERETT.

"'That's the last we-all hears of my sens'tive an' high-sperited brother ontil after Mister Lee surrenders. It's one mornin' when Jeff comes home, an' the manner of his return shorely displays his nobility of soul, that a-way, as ondiscouraged an' ondimmed. No one's lookin' for Jeff partic'lar, when I hears a steamboat whistle for our landin'. I, bein' as I am full of the ontamed cur'osity of yooth, goes curvin' out to see what's up. I hears the pilot give the engineer the bells to set her back on the sta'board wheel, an' then on both. The

boat comes driftin' in. A stagin' is let down, an' with the tread of a conqueror who should come ashore but my brother Jeff! Thar's nothin' in his hands; he ain't got nothin' with him that he ain't wearin'. An' all he has on is a old wool hat, a hick'ry shirt, gray trousers, an' a pair of copper-rivet shoes as red as a bay hoss. As he strikes the bank, Jeff turns an' sweeps the scene with the eye of a eagle. Then takin' a bogus silver watch outen his pocket, he w'irls her over his head by the leather string an' lets her go out into the river, *ker-chunk!*

"'"Which I enters into this yere rebellion," says Jeff, flashin' a proud, high glance on me where I stands wonderin', "without nothin', an' I proposes to return with honor ontarnished, an' as pore as I goes in."

"'As me an' Jeff reepairs up to the house, I notes the most renegade-lookin' nigger followin' behind.

"'"Whoever's this yere nigger?" I asks.

"'"He's my valet," says Jeff.

"'My arm's a heap too slight,' goes on Colonel Sterett, followin' a small libation, 'to strike a blow for the confed'racy, but my soul is shorely in the cause. I does try to j'ine, final, an' is only saved tharfrom, an' from what would, ondoubted, have been my certain death, by a reb gen'ral named Wheeler. He don't mean to do it; she's inadvertent so far as he's concerned; but he saves me jest the same. An' settin' yere as I be, enjoyin' the

friendship an' esteem of you-all citizens of Wolfville, I feels more an' more the debt of gratitoode I owes that gallant officer an' man.'

"'However does this Gen'ral Wheeler save you?' asks Dan Boggs. 'Which I'm shore eager to hear.'

"'The tale is simple,' responds the Colonel, 'an' it's a triboote to that brave commander which I'm allers ready to pay. It's in the middle years of the war, an' I'm goin' to school in a village which lies back from the river, an' is about twenty miles from my ancestral home. Thar's a stockade in the place which some invadin' Yanks has built, an' thar's about twenty of 'em inside, sort o' givin' orders to the village an' makin' its patriotic inhabitants either march or mark time, whichever chances to be their Yankee caprices.

"'As a troo Southern yooth, who feels for his strugglin' country, I loathes them Yankees to the limit, an' has no more use for 'em than Huggins has for a temp'rance lecturer.

"'One day a troop of reb cavalry jumps into the village, an' stampedes these yere invaders plumb off the scene. We gets the news up to the school, an' adjourns in a bunch to come down town an' cel'brate the success of the Southern arms. As I arrives at the field of carnage, a reb cavalryman is swingin' outen the saddle. He throws the bridle of his hoss to me.

"'"See yere, Bud," he says, "hold my hoss a minute while I sees if I can't burn this stockade."

"'I stands thar while the reb fusses away with some pine splinters an' lightwood, strugglin' to inaug'rate a holycaust. He can't make the landin'; them timbers is too green, that a-way.

"'While I'm standin' thar, lendin' myse'f to this yere conflagratory enterprise, I happens to cast my eyes over on the hills a mile back from the village, an' I'm shocked a whole lot to observe them eminences an' summits is bloo with Yankees comin'. Now I'm a mighty careful boy, an' I don't allow none to let a ragin' clanjamfrey of them Lincoln hirelings caper up on me while I'm holdin' a reb hoss. So I calls to this yere incendiary trooper where he's blowin' an' experimentin' an' still failin' with them flames.

"'"Secesh!" I shouts; "oh, you-all secesh! You'd a mighty sight better come get your hoss, or them Yanks who's bulgin' along over yonder'll spread your hide on the fence."

"'This reb takes a look at the Yanks, an' then comes an' gets his hoss. As he gathers up the bridle rein an' swings into the saddle, a mad thirst to fight, die an' bleed for my country seizes me, an' I grabs the reb's hoss by the bits an' detains him.

"'"Say, Mister," I pleads, "why can't you-all take me with you?"

"'"Which you're a lot too young, son," says the reb, takin' another size-up of the Yanks.

"'"I ain't so young as I looks," I argues; "I'm jest small of my age."

"'"Now, I reckons that's so," says the reb,

beamin' on me approvin', "an' you're likewise mighty peart. But I'll tell you, Bud, you ain't got no hoss."

"'"That's nothin'," I responds; "which if you-all will only get me a gun, I can steal a hoss, that a-way, in the first mile."

"'Seein' me so ready with them argyments, an' so dead pertinacious to go, this yere trooper begins to act oneasy, like his resolootion gets shook some. At last he gridds his teeth together like his mind's made up.

"'"Look yere, boy," he says, "do you know who our Gen'ral is?"

"'"No," I says, "I don't."

"'"Well," says the reb, as he shoves his feet deep in the stirrups, an' settles in his saddle like he's goin' to make some time; "well, he's a ragin' an' onfettered maverick, named Wheeler; an' from the way he goes skallyhootin' 'round, he's goin' to get us all killed or captured before ever we gets back, an' I don't want no chil'en on my hands."

"'With that this yere soldier yanks the bridle outen my grasp, claps the steel into his hoss's flanks, an' leaves me like a bullet from a gun. For my part, I stands thar saved; saved, as I says, by that Gen'ral Wheeler's repootation with his men.'"

CHAPTER XVII.

Old Man Enright's Love.

"SON, I'm gettin' plumb alarmed about myse'f," observed the Old Cattleman, as we drew together for our usual talk. "I've been sort o' cog'tatin' tharof, an' I begins to allow I'm a mighty sight too garrulous that a-way. This yere conversation habit is shore growin' on me, an', if I don't watch out, I'm goin' to be a bigger talker than old Vance Groggins,"

"Was Groggins a great conversationist?" I asked.

"Does this yere Vance Groggins converse? Which I wish I has stored by a pint of licker for everythin' Vance says! It would. be a long spell before ever I'm driven to go ransackin' 'round to find one of them life-savin' stations, called by common consent, a 's'loon!' This Vance don't do nothin' but talk; he's got that much to say, it gets in his way. Vance comes mighty clost to gettin' a heap the worst of it once merely on account of them powers of commoonication.

"You see, this yere Vance is a broke-down sport, an' is dealin' faro-bank for Jess Jenkins over on the Canadian. An' Vance jest can't resist takin' part in every conversation that's started. Let two gents

across the layout go to exchangin' views, or swappin' observations, an' you can gamble that Vance comes jimmin' along in. An' Vance is allers tellin' about his brother Abe. Does a gent mention that he brands eight hundred calves that spring round-up, Vance cuts in with the bluff that his brother Abe brands twelve hundred; does a sport su'gest that he sees a party win four thousand dollars ag'in monte or roulette or faro or some sech amoosement, Vance gets thar prompt with some ranikaboo relations of a time when his brother Abe goes ag'inst Whitey Bob at Wichita, makes a killin' of over sixty thousand dollars, an' breaks the bank.

"'My brother Abe,' says this yere scand'lous Vance that a-way, 'jest nacherally wins the kyarpets off Whitey Bob's floor.'

"Son, it's simple egreegious the way this Vance carries on in them fool rev'lations touchin' his brother Abe.

"It gets so, final, that a passel of sports lodges complaints with Jenkins. 'What's the use!' says them maddened sports to Jenkins. 'This Vance don't deal faro-bank; he jest don't do nothin' but talk. Thar we sets, our bets on the layout, an' we don't get no action. This Vance won't deal a kyard for fear we don't hear about that brother Abe Groggins of his'n.'

"Them criticisms makes Jenkins plenty quer'lous. He rounds Vance up an' curries him a whole lot. Then he tells Vance to pull his freight; he don't want him to deal faro-bank for him no more.

"At this, Vance turns plumb piteous, an' asks Jenkins not to throw him loose, that a-way. An' he promises to re-organize an' alter his system. 'I knows my failin's,' says Vance a heap mournful. 'You don't have to come 'round tauntin' me with 'em; I'm dead onto 'em myse'f. I'm too frank an' I'm too sociable; I'm too prone to regale my fellow gents with leafs from my experience; an' I realize, as well as you do, Jenk, it's wrong. Shorely, I've no right to stop in the middle of a deal to tell a story an' force the hopes an' fears, not to say the fortunes, of a half-dozen intense sports, an' some of 'em in the hole at that, to wait till I gets through! I know it ain't right, Jenk; but I promises you, if you'll let me go behind the box ag'in to-night, on the honor of a kyard sharp, you-all will never hear a yelp outen me from soda to hock. An' that's whatever!'

"'It ain't not alone that you talks forever,' remonstrates Jenkins; 'but it's them frightful lies you tells. Which they're enough to onsettle a gent's play, to say nothin' of runnin' the resk of raisin' a hoodoo an' queerin' my bank. But I tries you once more, Vance; only get it straight: So shore as ever you takes to onloadin' on the company one of them exaggerations about that felon Abe, I won't say "Go," I'll jest onlimber an' burn the moccasins off you with my gun.'

"It's that very night; Vance has been dealin' the game for mighty likely it's three hours, an' no one gets a verbal rise outen him more'n if he's a

graven image. Vance is gettin' proud of himse'f, an' Jenkins, who comes prowlin' 'round the game at times, begins to reckon mebby Vance'll do. All goes well ontil a party lets fly some hyperbole about a tavern he strikes in Little Rock, which for size an' extensif characteristics lays over anythin' on earth like a summer's cloud.

"'You thinks so?' says Vance, stoppin' the deal, an' leanin' a elbow on the box, while he goes projectin' towards the countenance of the Little Rock party with the forefinger of his other hand, kind o' claimin' his attention. 'You thinks so! I allows now you-all reckons that for a hotel, this yere Little Rock edifice is the old he-coon! Let me tell you somethin': My brother Abe goes out to one of them bathin' camps, swept by ocean breezes, on the Pacific slope, an' you should shorely oughter behold the joint he slams up! Pards, thar's more than two thousand rooms in that wickeyup! It's 'leven hundred an' twelve foot high, four thousand two hundred an' fifty-four foot long, an'——' It's here pore Vance catches Jenkins' eye glarin' on him hard an' remorseless—'an' twenty foot wide,' says Vance, a heap hurried, dashin' the kyards outen the box. 'Five lose, jack win,' concloodes Vance confoosedly, makin' a hasty change of subjects.

"Yes, indeed!" and the old gentleman looked thoughtfully across the lawn as he wound up his tale of the unfortunate Groggins, "Yes, indeed! If I keeps on talkin' away, I'll become a laughin'-stock, same as that locoed Vance! Thar's one

matter that allers imbues me with a heap of respect for deef an' dumb folks; which they shorely do keep things to themse'fs a whole lot."

It was fifteen minutes before I could convince my friend that his Wolfville stories in no sort diminished his dignity. Also, I reminded him of a promise to one day tell me of Enright's one affair of love; plainly his bond in that should be fulfilled. At last he gave way, and after commanding the coming of a favorite and highly refreshing beverage, held forth as follows:

"It's never been my beliefs," he said, "that Sam Enright would have dipped into them old love concerns of his if he'd been himse'f. Enright's sick at the time. Shore! he ain't sick to the p'int of bein' down in his blankets, an' is still meanderin' 'round the camp as dooty dictates or his interest calls, but he's plenty ailin' jest the same. Thar's the roodiments of a dispoote between Doc Peets an' Enright as to why his health that time is boggin' down. Peets puts it up it's a over-accoomulation of alkali; Enright allows it's because he's born so long ago. Peets has his way, however, bein' a scientist that a-way, an' takes possession of the case.

"No, it ain't them maladies that so weakens Enright he lapses into confidences about his early love; but you see, son, Peets stops his nose-paint; won't let him drink so much as a drop; an' bein' cut off short on nourishment like I says, it makes Enright—at least so I allers figgers—some

childish an' light-headed. That's right; you remove that good old Valley Tan from the menu of a party who's been adherin' an' referrin' to it year after year for mighty likely all his days, an' it sort o' takes the stiffenin' outen his dignity a lot; he begins to onbend an' wax easy an' confidenshul. Is seems then like he goes about cravin' countenance an' support. An' down onder my belt, it strikes me at the time, an' it shore strikes me yet, that ravishin' the canteen from Enright, nacherally enfeebles him an' sets him to talkin' an tellin' of past days. Oh, he don't keep up this yere onhealthful abstinence forever. Peets declar's Enright removed from danger, an' asks him to drink, himse'f, inside of two weeks.

"'Where a gent,' says Peets, elab'ratin' this yere theery of not drinkin' none, 'has been crookin' his elbow constant, an' then goes wrong, bodily, it's a great play to stop his nose-paint abrupt. It's a shock to him, same as a extra ace in a poker deck; an' when a gent is ill, shocks is what he needs.'

"'But let me savey about this,' says Dan Boggs, who's allers a heap inquis'tive an' searchin' after knowledge; 'do you-all impose this onwonted sobriety as a penalty, or do you make the play meedic'nal?'

"'Meedic'nal,' says Peets. 'In extreme cases, sobriety is plenty cooratif.'

"Does Enright bow to Doc Peets' demands about no whiskey that a-way? Son, Peets is plumb inex'rable about them preescriptions of his. He

looks on the mildest argyment ag'in 'em as personal affronts. Peets is the most immov'ble sharp, medical, that ever I crosses up with; an' when it comes to them preescriptions, the recklessest sport in Arizona lays down his hand.

"Once I knows Peets to pass on the failin' condition of a tenderfoot who's bunked in an' allows he'll die a lot over to the O. K. Restauraw. Peets decides this yere shorthorn needs abstinence from licker. Peets breaks the news to the onhappy victim, an' puts him on water till the crisis shall be past. Also, Peets notified the Red Light not to heed any requests of this party in respects to said nose-paint.

"It turns out this sick person, honin' for licker as is plumb nacheral, forgets himse'f as a gent an' sort o' reckons he'll get fraudulent with Peets. He figgers he'll jest come Injunin' into the Red Light, quil himse'f about a few drinks surreptitious, an' then go trackin' back to his blankets, an' Doc Peets none the wiser. So, like I says, this yere ill person fronts softly up to the Red Light bar an' calls for Valley Tan.

"Black Jack, the barkeep, don't know this party from a cross-L steer; he gets them mandates from Peets, but it never does strike Black Jack that this yere is the dyin' sport allooded to. In darkness that a-way, Black Jack tosses a glass on the bar an' shoves the bottle. It shore looks like that failin' shorthorn is goin' to quit winner, them recooperatifs.

"But, son, he's interrupted. He's filled his glass

—an' he's been plenty free about it—an' stands thar with the bottle in his hand, when two guns bark, an' one bullet smashes the glass an' the other the bottle where this person is holdin' it. No, this artillery practice don't stampede me none; I'm plumb aware it's Doc Peets' derringers from the go-off. Peets stands in the door, one of his little pup-guns in each hand.

"'Which I likes your aplomb!' says Black Jack to Peets, as he swabs off the bar in a peevish way. 'I makes it my boast that I'm the best-nachered barkeep between the Colorado an' the Rio Grande, an' yet I'm free to confess, sech plays chafes me. May I ask,' an' Black Jack stops wipin' the bar an' turns on Peets plumb p'lite, 'what your idee is in thus shootin' your way into a commercial affair in which you has no interest?'

"'This yere bibulous person is my patient,' says Peets, a heap haughty. 'I preescribes no licker; an' them preescriptions is goin' to be filled, you bet! if I has to fill 'em with a gun. Whatever do you-all reckon a medical practitioner is? Do you figger he's a Mexican, an' that his diagnosises, that a-way, don't go? I notifies you this mornin' as I stands yere gettin' my third drink, that if this outcast comes trackin' in with demands for nose-paint, to remember he's sick an' throw him out on his head. An' yere's how I'm obeyed!'

"Which, of course, this explains things to Black Jack, an' he sees his inadvertences. He comes out from behind the bar to where this sick maverick

has done fainted in the confoosion, an' collars him an' sets him on a cha'r.

"'Doc,' says Black Jack, when he's got the wilted gent planted firm an' safe, 'I tenders my regrets. Havin' neither brands nor y'earmarks to guide by, I never recognizes this person as your invalid at all; none whatever. I'd shore bent a gun on him an' harassed him back into his lair, as you requests, if I suspects his identity. To show I'm on the squar', Doc, I'll do this party any voylence, even at this late hour, which you think will make amends.'

"'Your apol'gy is accepted,' says Peets, but still haughty; 'I descerns how you gets maladroit through errors over which you has no control. As to this person, who's so full of stealthy cunnin', he's all right. So long as he don't get no licker, no voylence is called for in his case.' An' with that Peets conducts his patient, who's come to ag'in, back to his reservation.

"But I onbuckles this afternoon to tell you-all about Old Man Enright's early love, an' if I aims to make the trip before the moon comes up, I better hit the trail of them reminiscences an' no further delays.

"It's in the back room of the New York Store where the casks be, an' Enright, on whose nerves an' sperits Peets' preescriptions of 'no licker' has been feedin' for two full days, sits thar sort o' fidgin' with his fingers an' movin' his feet in a way which shows he's a heap on aige. Thar's a melancholy

settles on us all, as we camps 'round on crates an' shoe boxes an' silently sympathizes with Enright to see him so redooced. At last the grand old chief starts in to talk without questions or requests.

"'If you-all don't mind,' says Enright, 'I'll let go a handful of mem'ries touchin' my yooth. Thar's nothin' like maladies to make a gent sentimental, onless it be gettin' shot up or cut up with bullets or bowies; an' these yere visitations, which Peets thinks is alkali an' I holds is the burdens of them years of mine, shore leaves me plumb romantic.

"'Which I've been thinkin' all day, between times when I'm thinkin' of licker, of Polly Hawks; an' I'll say right yere she's my first an' only love. She's a fine young female, is Polly—tall as a saplin', with a arm on her like a cant-hook. Polly can lift an' hang up a side of beef, an' is as good as two hands at a log-rollin'.

"'This yere's back in old Tennessee on the banks of the Cumberland. It's about six years followin' on the Mexican war, an' I'm shot up'ards into the semblances of a man. My affections for Polly has their beginnin's in a coon-hunt into which b'ars an' dogs gets commingled in painful profoosion.

"'I ain't the wonder of a week with a rifle now, since I'm old an' dim, but them times on the Cumberland I has fame as sech. More'n once, ag'inst the best there is in either the Cumberland or the Tennessee bottoms, or on the ridge between, I've won as good as, say, first, second and fifth quarters in a shoot for the beef.'

"'Whatever do you-all call a fifth quarter of beef?' asks Dan Boggs. 'Four quarters is all I'm ever able to count to the anamile.'

"'It's yooth an' inexperience,' says Enright, 'that prompts them queries. The fifth quarter is the hide an' tallow; an' also thar's a sixth quarter, the same bein' the bullets in the stump which makes the target, an' which is dug out a whole lot, lead bein' plenty infrequent in them days I'm dreamin' of.

"'As I'm sayin', when Dan lams loose them thick-head questions, I'm a renowned shot, an' my weakness is huntin' b'ars. I finds 'em an' kills 'em that easy, I thinks thar's nothin' in the world but b'ars. An' when I ain't huntin' b'ars, I'm layin' for deer; an' when I ain't layin' for deer, I'm squawkin' turkeys; an' when I ain't squawkin' turkeys, I'm out nights with a passel of misfit dogs I harbors, a shakin' up the scenery for raccoons. Altogether, I'm some busy as you-all may well infer.

"'One night I'm coon huntin'. The dogs trees over on Rapid Run. When I arrives, the whole pack is cirkled 'round the base of a big beech, singin'; my old Andrew Jackson dog leadin' the choir with the air, an' my Thomas Benton dog growlin' bass, while the others warbles what parts they will, indiscrim'nate.

"'Nacherally, the dogs can't climb the tree none, an' I has to make that play myse'f. I lays down my gun, an' shucks my belts an' knife, an' goes swarmin' up the beech. It's shorely a teedious enterprise,

an' some rough besides. That beech seems as full of spikes an' thorns as a honey locust—its a sort o' porkypine of a tree.

"'Which I works my lacerated way into the lower branches, an' then glances up ag'in the firmaments to locate the coon. He ain't vis'ble none; he's higher up an' the leaves an' bresh hides him. I goes on till I'm twenty foot from the ground; then I looks up ag'in.

"'Gents, it ain't no coon; it's a b'ar, black as paint an' as big as a baggage wagon. He ain't two foot above me too; an' the sight of him, settin' thar like a black bale of cotton, an' his nearness, an' partic'larly a few terse remarks he lets drop, comes mighty clost to astonishin' me to death. I thinks of my gun; an' then I lets go all holts to go an' get it. Shore, I falls outen the tree; thar ain't no time to descend slow an' dignified.

"'As I comes crashin' along through them beech boughs, it inculcates a misonderstandin' among the dogs. Andrew Jackson, Thomas Benton an' the others is convoked about that tree on a purely coon theery. They expects me to knock the coon down to 'em. They shorely do not expect me to come tumblin' none myse'f. It tharfore befalls that when I makes my deboo among 'em, them canines, blinded an' besotted as I say with thoughts of coon, prounces upon me in a body. Every dog rends off a speciment of me. They don't bite twice; they perceives by the taste that it ain't no coon an' desists.

"'Which I don't reckon their worryin' me would have become a continyoous performance nohow; for me an' the dogs is hardly tangled up that a-way, when we're interfered with by the b'ar. Looks like the example I sets is infectious; for when I lets go, the b'ar lets go; an' I hardly hits the ground an' becomes the ragin' center of interest to Andrew Jackson, Thomas Benton an' them others, when the b'ar is down on all of us like the old Cumberland on a sandbar doorin' a spring rise. I shore regyards his advent that a-way as the day of jedgment.

"'No, we don't corral him. The b'ar simply r'ars back long enough to put Andrew Jackson an' Thomas Benton into mournin', an' then goes scuttlin' off through the bushes like the grace of heaven through a camp-meetin'. As for myse'f, I lays thar; an' what between dog an' b'ar an' the fall I gets, I'm as completely a thing of the past as ever finds refooge in that strip of timber. As near as I makes out by feelin' of myse'f, I ain't fit to make gourds out of. Of course, she's a mistake on the part of the dogs, an' plumb accidental as far as the b'ar's concerned; but it shore crumples me up as entirely as if this yere outfit of anamiles plots the play for a month.

"'With the last flicker of my failin' strength, I crawls to my old gent's teepee an' is took in. An' you shore should have heard the language of that household when they sees the full an' awful extent them dogs an' that b'ar lays me waste. Which I'm layed up eight weeks.

"'My old gent goes grumblin' off in the mornin', an' rounds up old Aunt Tilly Hawks to nurse me. Old Aunt Tilly lives over on the Painted Post, an' is plumb learned in yarbs an' sech as Injun turnips, opydeldock, live-forever, skoke-berry roots, jinson an' whitewood bark. An' so they ropes up Aunt Tilly Hawks an' tells her to ride herd on my wounds an' dislocations.

"'But I'm plumb weak an' nervous an' can't stand Aunt Tilly none. She ain't got no upper teeth, same as a cow, her face is wrinkled like a burnt boot, an' she dips snuff. Moreover, she gives me the horrors by allers singin' in a quaverin' way:

> "'Hark from the tombs a doleful sound,
> Mine y'ears attend the cry.
> Ye livin' men come view the ground
> Where you shall shortly lie.

"'Aunt Tilly sounds a heap like a tea-kettle when she's renderin' this yere madrigal, an' that, an' the words, an' all the rest, makes me gloomy an' dejected. I'm shore pinin' away onder these yere malign inflooences, when my old gent notes I ain't recooperatin', an' so he guesses the cause; an' with that he gives Aunt Tilly a lay-off, an' tells her to send along her niece Polly to take her place.

"'Thar's a encouragin' difference. Polly is big an' strong like I states; but her eyes is like stars, an' she's as full of sweetness as a bee tree or a bar'l of m'lasses. So Polly camps down by my couch of pain an' begins dallyin' soothin'ly with my heated

brow. I commences recoverin' from them attacks of b'ars an' dogs instanter.

"'This yere Polly Hawks ain't none new to me. I never co'ts her; but I meets her frequent at barn raisin's an' quiltin's, which allers winds up in a dance; an' in them games an' merriments, sech as "bowin' to the wittiest, kneelin' to the prettiest, an' kissin' the one you loves the best," I more than once regyards Polly as an alloorin' form of hooman hollyhock, an' selects her. But thar's no flush of burnin' love; nothin' more than them amiable formalities which befits the o'casion.

"'While this yere Polly is nursin' me, however, she takes on a different attitoode a whole lot. It looks like I begins to need her permanent, an' every time I sets my eyes on her I feels as soft as b'ar's grease. It's shorely love; that Polly Hawks is as sweet an' luscious as a roast apple.'

"'Is she for troo so lovely?' asks Faro Nell, who's been hangin' onto Enright's words.

"'Frankly, Nellie,' says Enright, sort o' pinchin' down his bluff; 'now that I'm ca'mer an' my blood is cool, this yere Polly don't seem so plumb prismatic. Still, I must say, she's plenty radiant.'

"'Does you-all,' says Dan Boggs, 'put this yere Polly in nom'nation to be your wife while you're quiled up sick?'

"'No, I defers them offers to moments when I'm more robust,' says Enright.

"'You shore oughter rode at her while you're sick that a-way,' remonstrates Boggs. 'That's the time

to set your stack down. Females is easy moved to pity, an', as I've heared—for I've nothin' to go by, personal, since I'm never married an' is never sick none—is a heap more prone to wed a gent who's sick, than when he's well a lot.'

"'I holds them doctrines myse'f,' observes Enright; 'however, I don't descend on Polly with no prop'sitions, neither then nor final, as you-all shall hear, Dan, if you'll only hold yourse'f down. No, I continyoos on lovin' Polly to myse'f that a-way, ontil I'm able to go pokin' about on crutches; an' then, as thar's no more need of her ministrations, Polly lines out for old Aunt Tilly's cabin ag'in.

"'It's at this yere juncture things happens which sort o' complicates them dreams of mine. While I ain't been sayin' nothin', an' has been plumb reticent as to my feelin's, jest the same, by look or act, or mebby it's a sigh, I tips off my hand. It ain't no time before all the neighbors is aware of my love for Polly Hawks. Also, this Polly has a lover who it looks like has been co'tin' her, an' bringin' her mink pelts an' wild turkeys indeescrim'nate, for months. I never do hear of this gent ontil I'm cripplin' 'round on them stilts of crutches; an' then I ain't informed of him none only after he's informed of me.

"'Thar's a measley little limberjaw of a party whose name is Ike Sparks; this Ike is allers runnin' about tellin' things an' settin' traps to capture trouble for other folks. Ike is a ornery anamile—

little an' furtif—mean enough to suck aigs, an' cunnin' enough to hide the shells. He hates everybody, this Ike does; an' he's as suspicious as Bill Johnson's dog, which last is that doubtful an' suspicious he shore walks sideways all his life for fear someone's goin' to kick him. This low-down Ike imparts to Polly's other lover about the state of my feelin's; an' then it ain't no time when I gets notice of this sport's existence.

"'It's in the licker room of the tavern at Pine Knot, to which scenes I've scrambled on them crutches one evenin', where this party first meets up with me in person. He's a big, tall citizen with lanky, long ha'r, an' is dressed in a blanket huntin' shirt an' has a coon-skin cap with the tail hangin' over his left y'ear. Also, he packs a Hawkins rifle, bullets about forty to the pound. For myse'f, I don't get entranced none with this person's looks, an' as I ain't fit, physical, for no skrimmage, I has to sing plumb low.

"'Thar's a band of us settin' 'round when this lover of Polly's shows in the door, drinkin' an' warblin' that entertainin' ditty, which goes:

> "'"Thar sits a dog, by a barn door,
> An' Bingo is his name, O!
> An' Bingo is his name."

"'As Polly's other beau comes in, we ceases this refrain. He pitches his rifle to the landlord over the bar, an' calls for a Baldface whiskey toddy. He takes four or five drinks, contemplatin' us mean-

while a heap disdainful. Then he arches his back, bends his elbows, begins a war-song, an' goes dancin' stiff-laig like a Injun, in front of the bar. This is how this extravagant party sings. It's what Colonel Sterett, yere, to whom I repeats it former, calls "blanket verse."

"'"Let all the sons of men b'ar witness!" sings this gent, as he goes skatin' stiff-laig about in a ring like I relates, arms bent, an' back arched; "let all the sons of men b'ar witness; an' speshully let a cowerin' varmint, named Sam Enright, size me up an' shudder! I'm the maker of deserts an' the wall-eyed harbinger of desolation! I'm kin to rattlesnakes on my mother's side; I'm king of all the eagles an' full brother to the b'ars! I'm the bloo-eyed lynx of Whiskey Crossin', an' I weighs four thousand pounds! I'm a he-steamboat; I've put a crimp in a cat-a-mount with nothin' but my livin' hands! I broke a full-grown allagator across my knee, tore him asunder an' showered his shrinkin' fragments over a full section of land! I hugged a cinnamon b'ar to death, an' made a grizzly plead for mercy! Who'll come gouge with me? Who'll come bite with me? Who'll come put his knuckles in my back? I'm Weasel-eye, the dead shot; I'm the blood-drinkin', skelp-t'arin', knife-plyin' demon of Sunflower Creek! The flash of my glance will deaden a whiteoak, an' my screech in anger will back the panther plumb off his natif heath! I'm a slayer an' a slaughterer, an' I cooks an' eats my dead! I can wade the Cumberland without wettin'

myse'f, an' I drinks outen the spring without touchin' the ground! I'm a swinge-cat; but I warns you not to be misled by my looks! I'm a flyin' bison, an' deevastation rides upon my breath! Whoop! whoop! whoopee! I'm the Purple Blossom of Gingham Mountain, an' where is that son of thunder who'll try an' nip me in the bud! Whoop! whoopee! I'm yere to fight or drink with any sport; ary one or both! Whoopee! Where is the stately stag to stamp his hoof or rap his antlers to my proclamations! Where is that boundin' buck! Whoopee! whoop! whoop!"

"'Then this yere vociferous Purple Blossom pauses for breath; but keeps up his stilt-laig dance, considerin' me meanwhile with his eye, plenty baleful. We-all on our parts is viewin' him over a heap respectful, an' ain't retortin' a word. Then he begins ag'in with a yelp that would stampede a field of corn.

"'"Who is thar lovelier than Polly Hawks!" he shouts. "Show me the female more entrancin', an' let me drop dead at her feet! Who is lovelier than Polly Hawks, the sweetheart of Flyin' Bison, the onchained tornado of the hills! Feast your gaze on Polly Hawks; her beauty would melt the heart of Nacher! I'm the Purple Blossom of Gingham Mountain; Polly Hawks shall marry an' follow me to my wigwam! Her bed shall be of b'ar-skins; her food shall be yearlin' venison, an' wild honey from the tree! Her gown shall be panther's pelts fringed 'round with wolf-tails an' eagles' claws!

She shall belt herse'f with a rattlesnake, an' her Sunday bonnet shall be a swarm of bees! When I kiss her it sounds like the crack of a whip, an' I wouldn't part with her for twenty cows! We will wed an' pop'late the earth with terror! Where is the sooicide who'll stand in my way?"

"'At this p'int the Purple Blossom leaves off dancin' an' fronts up to me, personal.

"'"Whoopee!" he says; "say that you don't love the girl an' I'll give you one hundred dollars before I spills your life!"

"'Which, of course, all these yere moosical an' terpshicoreen preeliminaries means simply so much war between me an' this sperited beau of Polly's, to see who'll own the lady's heart. I explains that I'm not jest then fit for combat, sufferin' as I be from that overabundance of dog an' b'ar. The Purple Blossom is plumb p'lite, an' says he don't hunger to whip no cripples. Then he names a day two months away when he allows he'll shore descend from Gingham Mountain, melt me down an' run me into candles to burn at the weddin' of him an' Polly Hawks. Then we drinks together, all fraternal, an' he gives me a chew of tobacco outen a box made of the head of a bald eagle, in token of amity, that a-way.

"'But that rumpus between the Purple Blossom an' me never does come off; an' them rites over me an' Polly is indef'nitely postponed. The fact is, I has to leave a lot. I starts out to commit a joke, an' it turns out a crime; an' so I goes streak-

in' it from the scenes of my yoothful frolics for safer stampin' grounds.

"'It's mebby six weeks followin' them declarations of the Purple Blossom. It's co't day at Warwhoop Crossin', an' the Jedge an' every law-sharp on that circuit comes trailin' into camp. This yere outfit of Warwhoop is speshul fretful ag'inst all forms of gamblin'. Wherefore the Jedge, an' the state's attorney, an' mebby five other speculators, at night adjourns to the cabin of a flat-boat which is tied up at the foot of the levee, so's they can divert themse'fs with a little draw-poker without shockin' the hamlet an' gettin' themse'fs arrested an' fined some.

"'It's gone to about fourth drink time after supper, an' I'm romancin' about, tryin' to figger out how I'm to win Polly, when as I'm waltzin' along the levee—I'm plumb alone, an' the town itse'f has turned into its blankets—I gets sight of this yere poker festival ragin' in the cabin. Thar they be, antein', goin' it blind, straddlin', raisin' before the draw, bluffin', an' bettin', an' havin' the time of their c'reers.

"'It's the spring flood, an' the old Cumberland is bank-full an' still a-risin'. The flat boat is softly raisin' an' fallin' on the sobbin' tide. It's then them jocular impulses seizes me, that a-way, an' I stoops an' casts off her one line, an' that flat boat swims silently away on the bosom of the river. The sports inside knows nothin' an' guesses less, an' their gayety swells on without a hitch.

"'It's three o'clock an' Jedge Finn, who's won about a hundred an' sixty dollars, realizes it's all the money in the outfit, an' gets cold feet plenty prompt. He murmurs somethin' about tellin' the old lady Finn he'd be in early, an' shoves back amidst the scoffs an' jeers of the losers. But the good old Jedge don't mind, an' openin' the door, he goes out into the night an' the dark, an' carefully picks his way overboard into forty foot of water. The yell the Jedge emits as he makes his little hole in the Cumberland is the first news them kyard sharps gets that they're afloat a whole lot.

"'It ain't no push-over rescooin' Jedge Finn that time. The one hundred an' sixty is in Mexican money, an' he's got a pound or two of it sinkered about his old frame in every pocket; so he goes to the bottom like a kag of nails.

"'But they works hard, an' at last fishes him out, an' rolls him over a bar'l to get the water an' the money outen him. Which onder sech treatment, the Jedge disgorges both, an' at last comes to a trifle an' is fed whiskey with a spoon.

"'Havin' saved the Jedge, the others turns loose a volley of yells that shorely scares up them echoes far an' wide. It wakes up a little old tug that's tied in Dead Nigger Bend, an' she fires up an' pushes forth to their relief. The tug hauls 'em back to Warwhoop for seventy dollars, which is paid out of the rescooed treasure of Jedge Finn, the same bein' declar'd salvage by them bandits he's been playin' with.

"'It's two o'clock in the afternoon when that band of gamblers pulls up ag'in at Warwhoop, an' they're shorely a saddened party as they files ashore. The village is thar in a frownin' an' resentful body to arrest 'em for them voylations, which is accordin' done.

"'At the same time, I regyards the play as the funniest,ondoubted, that's ever been evolved in Tennessee; but my mood changes as subsequent events assoomes a somber face. Old Jedge Finn goes fumin' about like a wronged lion, an' the rest is as hot as election day in a hornet's nest. Pards, I'm a Mexican! if they don't indict me for piracy on the high seas, an' pledge their words to see me hanged before ever co't adjourns.

"'That lets me out, right thar! I sees the symptoms of my onpop'larity in advance, an' don't procrastinate none. I goes sailin' over the divide to the Tennessee, down the Tennessee to the Ohio, down the Ohio to the Mississippi, down the Mississippi to the Arkansaw, up the Arkansaw to Little Rock; an' thar I pauses, exhausted shore, but safe as a murderer in Georgia. Which I never does go back for plumb ten years.

"'Nacherally, because of this yere exodus, I misses my engagements with the Purple Blossom; also them nuptials I plots about Polly Hawks, suffers the kybosh a whole lot. However, I survives, an' Polly survives; she an' the Purple Blossom hooks up a month later, an' I learns since they shore has offsprings enough to pack a primary

or start a public school. It's all over long ago, an' I'm glad the kyards falls as they do. Still, as I intimates, thar's them moments of romance to ride me down, when I remembers my one lone love affair with Polly Hawks, the beauty of the Painted Post.'

"Enright pauses, an' we-all sets still a moment out of respects to the old chief. At last Dan Boggs, who's always bubblin' that a-way, speaks up:

"'Which I'm shore sorry,' says Dan, 'you don't fetch the moosic of that Purple Blossom's war-song West. I deems that a mighty excellent lay, an' would admire to learn it an' sing it some myse'f. I'd shore go over an' carol it to Red Dog; it would redooce them drunkards to frenzy.'"

CHAPTER XVIII.

When Whiskey Billy Died.

"LIES in the lump that a-way," said the Old Cattleman, apropos of some slight discussion in which we were engaged, "is bad—an' make no doubt about it!—that is, lies which is told malev'-lent.

"But thar's a sort of ranikaboo liar on earth, an' I don't mind him nor his fabrications, none whatever. He's one of these yere amiable gents who's merely aimin' to entertain you an' elevate your moods; an' carryin' out sech plans, he sort o' spreads himse'f, an' gets excursive in conversation, castin' loose from facts as vain things onworthy of him. Thar used to be jest sech a mendacious party who camps 'round Wolfville for a while—if I don't misrecollect, he gets plugged standin' up a through stage, final—who is wont to lie that a-way; we calls him 'Lyin' Amos.' But they're only meant to entertain you; them stories be. Amos is never really out to put you on a wrong trail to your ondoin'.

"We-all likes Amos excellent; but, of course, when he takes to the hills as a hold-up, somebody has to down him; an' my mem'ry on that p'int is,

they shorely do. What for lies would this yere Amos tell? Well, for instance, Amos once regales me with a vivid picture of how he backs into a corner an' pulls his lonely gun on twenty gents, all 'bad.' This yere is over in Deming. An' he goes on dilatin' to the effect that he stops six of 'em for good with the six loads in his weepon, an' then makes it a stand-off on the remainin' fourteen with the empty gun.

"'It is the slumberin' terrors of my eye, I reckons,' says this Lyin' Amos.

"Which it's reason, an' likewise fact, that sech tales is merest figments on their faces; to say nothin' of the hist'ry of that camp of Deming, which don't speak of no sech blood.

"But, as I says, what of it? Pore Lyin' Amos! —he's 'cashed in an' settled long ago, like I mentions, goin' for the Wells-Fargo boxes onct too frequent! Which the pitcher goes too often to the well, that a-way, an' Amos finds it out! Still, Amos is only out to entertain me when he onfurls how lucky an' how ferocious he is that time at Deming. Amos is simply whilin' the hours away when he concocts them romances; an' so far from bein' distrustful of him on account tharof, or holdin' of him low because he lets his fancy stampede an' get away with him, once we saveys his little game in all its harmlessness, it makes Amos pop'lar. We encourages Amos in them expansions.

"Speakin' of lyin', an' bein' we're on the subject,

it ain't too much to state that thar's plenty o'casions when lyin' is not only proper but good. It's the thing to do.

"Comin' to cases, the world's been forever basin' its game on the lies that's told; an' I reckons now if every gent was to turn in an' tell nothin' but the trooth for the next few hours, thar would be a heap of folks some hard to find at the close of them mootual confidences. Which places now flourishin' like a green bay-tree would be deserted wastes an' solitoodes. Yes, as I says, now I gets plumb cog'tative about it, sech attempts to put down fiction might result in onpreecedented disaster. Thar be times when trooth should shorely have a copper on it; but we lets that pass as spec'lative.

"As my mind is led back along the trail, thar looms before the mirror of mem'ry a hour when the whole Wolfville outfit quits every other game to turn itse'f loose an' lie. Which for once we takes the limit off. Not only do we talk lies, we acts 'em; an' Enright an' Doc Peets an' Texas Thompson, as well as Moore an' Tutt an' Boggs, to say nothin' of myse'f an' Cherokee Hall, an' the rest of the round-up, gets in on the play. Which every gent stands pat on them inventions to this yere day, disdainin' excooses an' declinin' forgiveness tharfor. Moreover, we plays the same system ag'in, layout an' deal box bein' sim'lar. The fact is, if ever a outfit's hand gets crowded, it's ours.

"The demands for these yere falsehoods has its first seeds one evenin' when a drunken party comes

staggerin' into camp from Red Dog. It's strange; but it looks like Wolfville has a fasc'nation for them Red Dog sots; which they're allers comin' over. This victim of alcohol is not a stranger to us, not by no means; though mostly he holds his revels in his Red Dog home. His name I disremembers, but he goes when he's in Wolfville by the name of 'Whiskey Billy.' If he has a last name, which it's likely some he has, either we never hears it or it don't abide with us. Mebby he never declar's himse'f. Anyhow, when he gets his nose-paint an' wearies folks in Wolfville, sech proceedin's is had onder the nom de ploome of 'Whiskey Billy,' with nothin' added by way of further brands or y'ear-marks tharonto.

"This partic'lar date when he onloads on us his companionship, Whiskey Billy is shore the drunkest an' most ediotic I ever sees. Troo, he saveys enough to pull his freight from Red Dog; but I allers allows that's merely the work of a loocid interval.

"Whiskey Billy ain't brightened Wolfville with his society more'n an hour—he only gets one drink with us—when he lapses into them treemors. An', you hear me, son, he shorely has 'em bad; Huggins' attacks that a-way is pooerile to 'em.

"It looks like that Red Dog whiskey is speshul malignant. I've beheld gents who has visions before ever Whiskey Billy emits that preelim'nary yelp in the Red Light, an' allows that Black Jack is pawin' 'round to skelp him; but I'm yere to remark,

an' ready to enforce my statements with money, argyments or guns, I never witnesses no case which is a four-spot to Whiskey Billy's.

"Why, it gets so before he quits out—which he does after frothin' at the mouth for days, an' Boggs, an' Tutt, an' Jack Moore, with Doc Peets sooper-visin', ridin' herd onto him an' holdin' him down in his blankets all the time—that if Whiskey Billy goes to take a drink of water, he thinks the beverage turns to blood. If he sees anythin' to eat, it changes into a Gila monster, or some sech creepin' an' disrepootable reptile; an' Billy jest simply r'ars back an' yells.

"As I intimates, he yields to them errors touchin' his grub an' drink for days; followin' which, Billy nacherally gives way to death, to the relief of all concerned.

"'You can gamble I'm never so pleased to see a gent die in my life!' says Dan Boggs.

"It's most likely the second day after Billy's been seein' things, an' we've corraled him in a wickeyup out back of the dance hall, when Doc Peets is in the Red Light thoughtfully absorbin' his whiskey.

"'This yere riotous patient of mine,' says Peets, as he leans on the bar an' talks general an' free to all, 'this noisy party whom you now hears callin' Dan Boggs a rattlesnake, bein' misled to that extent by Red Dog licker, has a ca'm moment about first drink time this mornin', an' beseeches me to send for his mother. As a sick gent has a

right to dictate terms that a-way, I dispatches a telegram to the lady he names, sendin' of the same by Old Monte to be slammed through from Tucson. I reckons she gets it by now. Old Monte an' the stage has been in Tucson for more'n an hour, an' as 'lectricity is plenty sudden as a means, I takes it Whiskey Billy's mother is informed that he's askin' for her presence.'

"'Which if he's callin' an' honin' for his mother,' says Texas Thompson, who's at the bar with Peets, 'it's cattle to sheep he's a goner. You can allers tell when a sport is down to his last chip; he never omits to want to see his mother.'

"'That's whatever!' says Enright. 'Like Texas, I holds sech desires on the part of this yere Red Dog martyr as markin' the beginnin' of the end.'

"'Bein' he's plumb locoed,' remarks Peets, after Texas an' Enright expresses themse'fs, 'I takes the liberty to rustle them clothes of Billy's for signs. I developed letters from this near relatif he's clamorin' for; also a picture as shows she's as fine a old lady as ever makes a flapjack. From the way she writes, it's all plain an' easy he's been sendin' her some rainbows about how he's loomin' up, like Slim Jim does his sister that a-way. He's jest now industriously trackin' 'round, lookin' to locate himse'f as a lawyer. I don't reckon this yere mother has the slightest idee he's nothin' more'n a ragged, busted victim of Red Dog. Lookin' at it that a-way,' concloodes Peets, 'I'm wonderin' whether I don't make a crazy-hoss play sendin' this lady them summons.'

"'When she gets here, if she comes,' says Enright, an' his voice shows a heap of sympathetic interest; 'when she finds out about Whiskey Billy, it's goin' to break her heart. That she ain't game to make the trip is shorely to be hoped.'

"'You can gamble a pony she comes,' says Texas. 'If it's a wife, now, like mine—which goes ropin' 'round for a divorce over in Laredo recent; an', as you-all is aware, she shorely ties it down—thar might be a chance out ag'in her advent. But bein' she's his mother, Wolfville may as well brace itse'f for the shock.'

"'I don't reckon thar's no doubt of it, neither,' replies Enright, drawin' a sigh; 'which bein' the case, we've got to organize. This camp must turn in when she gets here an' deloode that pore old mother into the belief that her son Billy's been the prop an' stay of Arizona, an' that his ontimely cuttin' off quenches the most shinin' light that a-way of the age wherein we lives.'

"'Mighty likely,' says Peets, 'we gets a message from her to-morry, when Old Monte trails in. That'll tell us what to expect. I'm like you-all, however; I don't allow thar's a morsel of doubt about that mother comin'.'

"'Which I shorely hopes she does,' says Texas 'an' I yereby drinks to it, an' urges every gent likewise. If thar's a thing on earth that melts me, it's one o' them gray-ha'red old ladies. Young females that a-way is all right, an' it's plenty nacheral for a gent to be cur'ous an' pleased tharwith;

but I never does track up with an old lady, white-ha'red an' motherly mind you, but I takes off my sombrero an' says: "You'll excuse me, marm, but I wants to trespass on your time long enough to ask your pardon for livin'." That's right; that's the way I feels; plumb religious at the mere sight of 'em. If I was to meet as many as two of 'em at onct, I'd j'ine the church. The same bein' troo, I'm sayin' that this yere Whiskey Billy's mother can't strike camp too soon nor stop too long for Texas Thompson.'

"'Every gent I reckons feels all sim'lar,' says Cherokee Hall. 'A old lady is the one splendid thing the Lord ever makes. I knows a gent over back of Prescott, an' the sight of a good old woman would stop his nose-paint for a week. Wouldn't drink a drop nor play a kyard, this party wouldn't, for a week after he cuts the trail of somebody's old mother. He allows it revives mem'ries of his own, an' that he ain't out to mix no sech visions with faro-bank an' whiskey bottles.'

"'An' I applauds this yere Prescott person's views,' says Texas Thompson, 'an' would be proud to know the gent.'

"'How long, Peets,' says Enright, who's been thinkin' hard an' serious, 'how long—an' start at onct—before ever this yere Whiskey Billy's parent is goin' to strike the camp?'

"'It'll be five days shore,' answers Peets. 'She's 'way back yonder the other side of the Missouri.'

"When Old Monte comes rumblin' along in next day, thar's the message from Whiskey Billy's mother. She's shore a-comin'. This yere Billy is so plumb in the air, mental, he never does know it, an' he dies ten hours before the old lady drives in. But Wolfville's ready. That's the time when the whole band simply suspends everythin' to lie.

"Whiskey Billy is arrayed in Doc Peets' best raiment, so, as Peets says, he looks professional like a law sharp should. An' bein' as we devotes to Billy all the water the windmill can draw in a hour, he is a pattern of personal neatness that a-way.

"Enright—an' thar never is the gent who gets ahead of that old silver tip—takin' the word from Peets in advance, sends over to Tucson for a coffin as fine as the dance-hall piano, an' it comes along in the stage ahead of Billy's mother. When she does get thar, Billy's all laid out handsome an' tranquil in the dinin'-room of the O. K. Restauraw, an' the rest of us is eatin' supper in the street. It looks selfish to go crowdin' a he'pless remainder that a-way, an' him gettin' ready to quit the earth for good; so the dinin'-room bein' small, an' the coffin needin' the space, the rest of us vamoses into the causeway, an' Missis Rucker is dealin' us our chuck when the stage arrives.

"Thar's a adjournment prompt, however, an' we-all goes over to cheer up Whiskey Billy's mother when she gets out. Enright leads off, an' the rest trails in an' follows his play, shakin' the old lady's

hand an' givin' her the word what a success her boy is while he lives, an' what a blow it is when he peters. It comes plumb easy, that mendacity does, for, as Texas Thompson surmises, she is shorely the beautifulest old lady I ever sees put a handkerchief to her eyes.

"'Don't weep, marm,' says Enright. 'This yere camp of Wolfville, knowin' Willyum an' his virchoos well, by feelin' its own onmeasured loss, puts no bound'ries on its sympathy for you.'

"'Death loves a shinin' mark, marm,' says Doc Peets, as he presses the old lady's hand an' takes off his hat, 'an' the same bein' troo, it's no marvel the destroyer experiments 'round ontil he gets your son Willyum's range. We're like brothers, Willyum an' me, an' from a close, admirin' friendship which extends over the year an' a half since he leaves you in the States, I'm shore qualified to state how Willyum is the brightest, bravest gent in Arizona.'

"An' do you know, son, this yere, which seems a mockery while I repeats it now, is like the real thing at the time! I'm a coyote! if it don't affect Texas Thompson so he sheds tears; an' Dan Boggs an' Tutt an' Moore an' Cherokee Hall is lookin' far from bright about the eyes themse'fs.

"We-all goes over to the O. K. House, followin' the comin' of the stage, an' leads the old gray mother in to the side of her son, an' leaves her thar. Enright tells her, as we turns cat-foot to trail out so she won't be pestered by the presence of us, as

how Peets'll come back in a hour to see her, an' that as all of us'll be jest across the street, it'll be plenty easy to fetch us if she feels like company. As we starts for the Red Light to get somethin' to cheer us up, I sees her where she 's settin' with her arm an' face on the coffin.

"It's great work, though, them lies we tells; an' I notes how the mother's pride over what a good an' risin' sport her son has been, half-way breaks even with her grief.

"Thar is only one thing which happens to disturb an' mar the hour, an' not a whisper of this ever drifts to Whiskey Billy's mother. She's busy with her sorrow where we leaves her, an' she never hears a sound but her own sobs. It's while we're waitin', all quiet an' pensif, camped about the Red Light. Another outlaw from Red Dog comes cavortin' in. Of course, he is ignorant of our bein' bereaved that a-way, but he'd no need to be.

"'Whatever's the matter with you-all wolves yere?' he demands, as he comes bulgin' along into the Red Light. 'Where's all your howls?'

"Texas arises from where he's settin' with his face in his hands, an' wipin' the emotion outen his eyes, softly an' reverentially beats his gun over this yere party's head; whereupon he c'llapses into the corner till called for. Then we-all sets down silent an' sympathetic ag'in.

"It's the next day when Whiskey Billy takes his last ride over to Tucson on a buckboard. A dozen of us goes along, makin' good them bluffs about

Billy's worth; Enright an' Peets is in the stage with the old mother, an' the rest of us on our ponies as a bodygyard of honor.

"'An' it is well, marm,' says Enright, as we-all shakes hands, as Billy an' his mother is about to leave Tucson, an' we stands b'ar-headed to say *adios;* 'an' death quits loser half its gloom when one reflects that while Willyum dies, he leaves the world an' all of us better for them examples he exerts among us. Willyum may die, but his mem'ry will live long to lead an' guide us.'

"I could see the old mother's eyes shine with pride through her tears when Enright says this; an' as she comes 'round an' shakes an' thanks us all speshul, I'm shorely proud of Wolfville's chief. So is everybody, I reckons; for when we're about a mile out on the trail back, an' all ridin' silent an' quiet, Texas ups an' shakes Enright by the hand a heap sudden, an' says:

"'Sam Enright, I ain't reported as none emotional, but I'm yours to command from now till death, an' yere's the hand an' word of Texas Thompson on it.'"

CHAPTER XIX.

When the Stage Was Stopped.

"CAMP down into that cha'r thar, son," said the Old Cattleman with much heartiness. "Which I'm waitin' for that black boy Tom to come back; I sends him for my war-bags. No, I don't need 'em none, only I've got to give this yere imbecile Tom money. Them Senegambians is shore a pecooliar people. They gets a new religion same as you-all gets a new hat, an' they changes their names like some folks does their shirt. Which they're that loose an' liable about churches an' cognomens!

"As for money, take this boy Tom. He actooally transacts his life on the theery that he has prior claims on every splinter of my bank-roll. Jest now he descends onto me an' e'labe'rately states his title to ten *pesos*. Says he's done j'ined a new church, an' has been made round-up boss or somethin' to a outfit called, 'The Afro-American Widows' Ready Relief Society,' an' that his doos is ten chips. Of course, he has to have the *dinero*, so I dismisses him for my wallet like I says.

"Does them folks change their names? They changes 'em as read'ly as a Injun breaks camp; does it at the drop of the hat. This yere Guinea of

mine, his name's Tom. Yet at var'ous times, he informs me of them mootations he's institooted. He's been 'Jim' an' 'Sam' an' 'Willyum Henry,' an' all in two months. Shore, I don't pay no heed to sech vagaries, but goes on callin' him 'Tom,' jest the same. An' he keeps comin' when I calls, too, or I'd shore burn the ground 'round him to a cinder. I'd be a disgrace to old Tennessee to let my boy Tom go preescribin' what I'm to call him. But they be cur'ous folks! The last time this hirelin' changes his name, I asks the reason.

"'Tom,' I says, 'this yere is the 'leventh time you cinches on a new name. Now, tell me, why be you-all attemptin' to shift to "Willyum Henry?"'

"'Why, Marse,' he says, after thinkin' hard a whole lot, 'I don't know, only my sister gets married ag'in last night, an' I can't think of nothin' else to do, so I sort o' allows I'll change my name.'"

A moment later the exuberant and many-titled Tom appeared with the pocket-book. My old friend selected a ten-dollar bill and with an air of severity gave it to his expectant servitor.

"Thar you be," he observed. "Now, go pay them doos, an' don't hanker 'round me for money no more for a month. You can't win from me ag'in before Christmas, no matter how often you changes your name, or how many new churches you plays in with. For a nigger, you-all is a mighty sight too vol'tile. Your sperits is too tireless, an' stays too long on the wing. Which, onless you cultivates a placider mood an' studies reepose a whole lot, I'll

go foragin' about in my plunder an' search forth a quirt, or mebby some sech stingin' trifle as a trace-chain, an' warp you into quietood an' peace. I reckons now sech ceremonies would go some ways towards beddin' you down an' inculcatin' lessons of patience a heap."

The undaunted Tom listened to his master's gloomy threats with an air of cheer. There was a happy grin on his face as he accepted the money and scraped a "Thanky, sah!" To leave a religious impression which seemed most consistent with the basis of Tom's appeal, that dusky claimant of ten dollars, as he withdrew, hummed softly a camp-meeting song:

"Tu'n around an' tu'n yo' face,
Untoe them sweet hills o' grace.
(D' pow'rs of Sin yo' am scornin'!)
Look about an' look a oun',
Fling yo' sin-pack on d' groun'.
(Yo' will meet wid d' Lord in d' mornin'.)"

"Speakin' about this yere vacillatin' Tom," said the old gentleman, as he watched that person disappear, "shiftin' his religious grazin' ground that a-way, let me tell you. Them colored folks pulls on an' pulls off their beliefs as easy as a Mexican. An' their faith never gets in their way; them tenets never seems to get between their hocks an' trip 'em up in anythin' they wants to do. They goes rangin' 'round, draggin' them religious lariats of theirs, an' I never yet beholds that church which can drive any picket pin of doctrines, or prodooce any hobbles of a creed, that'll hold a Mexican or a nigger, or

keep him from prancin' out after the first notion that nods or beckons to him. Thar's no whim an' no fancy which can make so light a wagon-track he won't follow it off.

"Speakin' of churches that a-way: This yere Tom's been with me years. One day about two months ago, he fronts up to me an' says:

"'I'se got to be mighty careful what I does now; I'se done j'ined. I gives my soul to heaven on high last night, an' wrops myse'f tight an' fast in bonds of savin' grace wid d' Presbyter'an chu'ch. Yes, sah, I'm a christian, an' I don't want no one, incloodin' myse'f, to go forgettin' it.'

"This yere news don't weigh on me partic'lar, an' I makes no comments. It's three weeks later when Tom cuts loose another commoonication.

"'You rec'llects,' he says, 'about me bein' a j'iner an' hookin' up wid d' Presbyter'ans? Well, I'se done shook 'em; I quit that sanchooary for d' Mefodis.' D' Presbyter'an is a heap too gloomy a religion for a niggah, sah. Dey lams loose at me wid foreord'nation an' preedest'nation, an' how d' bad place is paved wid chil'ens skulls, an' how so many is called, an' only one in a billion beats d' gate; an' fin'lly, las' Sunday, B'rer Peters, he's d' preacher, he ups an' p'ints at me in speshul an' says he sees in a dream how I'm h'ar-hung an' breeze-shaken over hell; an', sah, he simply scare dis niggah to where I jest lay down in d' pew an' howl. After I'se done lamented till my heart's broke, I passes in my resignation, an' now I'se gone an' done attach

myse'f to d' Mefodis'. Thar's a deal mo' sunshine among d' Mefodis' folks, an' d' game's a mighty sight easier. All you does is get sprunkled, an' thar you be, in wid d' sheep, kerzip!'

"In less'n a month Tom opens up on them religious topics once more. I allers allows him to talk as long an' as much as ever he likes, as you-all couldn't stop him none without buckin' an' gaggin' him, so what's the use?

"'I aims to excuse myse'f to you, sah,' says Tom this last time, 'for them misstatements about me leavin' d' Presbyter'ans for d' Mefodis.' I does do it for troo, but now I'se gone over, wool an' weskit, to d' Baptis'. An', sah, I feels mighty penitent an' promisin', I does; I'm gwine to make a stick of it dis time. It's resky to go changin' about from one fold to the other like I'se been doin'; a man might die between, an' then where is he?'

"'But how about this swap to the Baptist church?' I asks. 'I thought you tells me how the Methodist religion is full of sunshine that a-way.'

"'So I does, sah,' says Tom; 'so I does, word for word, like you remembers it. But I don't know d' entire story then. The objections I has to d' Mefodis' is them 'sperience meetin's they holds. They 'spects you to stan' up an' tell 'em about all yo' sins, an 'fess all you've been guilty of endoorin' yo' life! Now, sech doin's tu'ns out mighty embarrassin' for a boy like Tom, who's been a-livin' sort o' loose an' lively for a likely numbah of years, sah, an' I couldn't stan' it, sah! I'm too modes' to

be a Mefodis'. So I explains an' 'pologizes to d' elders; then I shins out for d' Baptis' folks next door. An' it's all right. I'm at peace now: I'm in d' Baptis' chu'ch, sah. You go inter d' watah, kersause! an' that sets yo' safe in d' love of d' Lamb.'"

Following these revelations of my friend concerning the jaunty fashion in which the "boy Tom" wore his religion as well as his name, I maintained a respectful silence for perhaps a minute, and then ventured to seek a new subject. I had been going over the vigorous details of a Western robbery in the papers. After briefly telling the story as I remembered it, in its broader lines at least, I carried my curiosity to that interesting body politic, the town of Wolfville.

"In the old days," I asked, "did Wolfville ever suffer from stage robberies, or the operations of banditti of the trail?"

"Wolfville," responded my friend, "goes ag'inst the hold-up game so often we lose the count. Mostly, it don't cause more'n a passin' irr'tation. Them robberies an' rustlin's don't, speakin' general, mean much to the public at large. The express company may gnash its teeth some, but comin' down to cases, what is a Wells-Fargo grief to us? Personal, we're out letters an' missifs from home, an' I've beheld individooals who gets that heated about it you don't dar' ask 'em to libate ontil they cools; but as a common thing, we-all don't suffer no practical set-backs. We're shy letters; but sech wounds

is healed by time an' other mails to come. We gains what comfort we can from sw'arin' a lot, an' turns to the hopeful footure for the rest. Thar's one time, however, when Wolfville gets wrought up.

"Which the Wolfville temper, usual, is ca'm an' onperturbed that a-way. Thar's a steadiness to Wolfville that shows the camp has depth; it can lose without thinkin' of sooicide, it can win an' not get drunk. The Wolfville emotions sets squar' an' steady in the saddle, an' it takes more than mere commonplace buckin' to so much as throw its foot loose from a stirrup, let alone send it flyin' from its seat.

"On this yere o'casion, however, Wolfville gets stirred a whole lot. For that matter, the balance of Southeast Arizona gives way likewise, an' excitement is gen'ral an' shorely mounts plumb high. I remembers plain, now my mind is on them topics, how Red Dog goes hysterical complete, an' sets up nights an' screams. Which the vocal carryin's on of that prideless village is a shame to coyotes!

"It's hold-ups that so wrings the public's feelin's. Stages is stood up; passengers, mail-bags an' express boxes gets cleaned out for their last splinter. An' it ain't confined to jest one trail. This festival of crime incloodes a whole region; an' twenty stages, in as many different places an' almost as many days, yields up to these yere bandits. Old Monte, looks like, is a speshul fav'rite; they goes through that old drunkard twice for all thar is in the vehicle. The last time the gyard gets downed.

"No; the stage driver ain't in no peril of bein' plugged. Thar's rooles about stage robbin', same as thar is to faro-bank an' poker. It's onderstood by all who's interested, from the manager of the stage company to the gent in the mask who's holdin' the Winchester on the outfit, that the driver don't fight. He's thar to drive, not shoot; an' so when he hears the su'gestion, 'Hands up!' that a-way, he stops the team, sets the brake, hooks his fingers together over his head, an' nacherally lets them road agents an' passengers an' gyards, settle events in their own onfettered way. The driver, usual, cusses out the brigands frightful. The laws of the trail accords him them privileges, imposin' no reestrictions on his mouth. He's plumb free to make what insultin' observations he will, so long as he keeps his hands up an' don't start the team none ontil he's given the proper word; the same comin' from the hold-ups or the gyards, whoever emerges winner from said emeutes.

"As I states, the last time Old Monte is made to front the iron, the Wells-Fargo gyard gets plugged as full of lead as a bag of bullets. An' as to that business of loot an' plunder, them miscreants shorely harvests a back load! It catches Enright a heap hard, this second break which these yere felons makes.

"Cherokee Hall an' me is settin' in the Red Light, whilin' away time between bev'rages with argyments, when Enright comes ploddin' along in with the tidin's. Cherokee an' me, by a sing'lar

coincidence, is discussin' the topic of 'probity' that a-way, although our loocubrations don't flourish none concernin' stage rustlin'. Cherokee is sayin':

"'Now, I holds that trade—what you-all might call commerce, is plenty sappenin' to the integrity of folks. Meanin' no aspersions on any gent in camp, shorely not on the proprietors of the New York Store, what I reiterates is that I never meets up with the party who makes his livin' weighin' things, or who owns a pa'r of scales, who's on the level that a-way. Which them balances, looks like, weaves a spell on a gent's moral princ'ples. He's no longer on the squar'.'

"I'm r'ared back on my hocks organizin' to combat the fal'cies of Cherokee, when Enright pulls up a cha'r. By the clouds on his face, both me an' Cherokee sees thar's somethin' on the old chief's mind a lot, wherefore we lays aside our own dispootes—which after all, has no real meanin', an' is what Colonel William Greene Sterett calls 'ac'demic'—an' turns to Enright to discover whatever is up. Black Jack feels thar's news in the air an' promotes the nose-paint without s'licitation. Enright freights his glass an' then says:

"'You-all hears of the noomerous stage robberies? Well, Wolfville lose ag'in. I, myse'f, this trip am put in the hole partic'lar. If I onderstands the drift of my own private affairs, thar's over forty thousand dollars of mine on the stage, bein' what balance is doo me from that last bunch of cattle. It's mighty likely though she's in drafts that a-way;

an' I jest dispatches one of my best riders with a lead hoss to scatter over to Tucson an' wire informations east, to freeze onto that money ontil further tidin's; said drafts, if sech thar be, havin' got into the hands of these yere diligent hold-ups aforesaid.'

"'Forty thousand dollars!' remarks Cherokee. 'Which that is a jolt for shore!'

"'It shorely shows the oncertainties of things,' says Enright, ag'in referrin' to his glass. 'I'm in the very act of congratulatin' myse'f, mental, that this yere is the best season I ever sees, when a party rides in from the first stage station towards Tucson, with the tale. It's shore a paradox; it's a case where the more I win, the more I lose. However, I'm on the trail of Jack Moore; a conference with Jack is what I needs right now. I'll be back by next drink time;' an' with that Enright goes surgin' off to locate Jack.

"Cherokee an' me, as might be expected, turns our powers of conversation loose with this new last eepisode of the trail.

"'An' I'm struck speshul,' says Cherokee, 'about what Enright observes at the finish, that it's a instance where the more he wins, the more he loses; an' how this, his best season, is goin' to be his worst. I has experiences sim'lar myse'f onct. Which the cases is plumb parallel!

"'This time when my own individooal game strikes somethin' an' glances off, is 'way back. I gets off a boat on the upper river at a camp called

Rock Island. You never is thar? I don't aim to encourage you-all ondooly, still your failure to see Rock Island needn't prey on you as the rooin of your c'reer. I goes ashore as I relates, an' the first gent I encounters is old Peg-laig Jones. This yere Peg-laig is a madman to spec'late at kyards, an' the instant he sees me, he pulls me one side, plenty breathless with a plan he's evolved.

"'"Son," says this yere Peg-laig, "how much money has you?"

"'I tells him I ain't over strong; somethin' like two hundred dollars, mebby.

"'"That's enough," says Peg-laig. "Son, give it to me. I'll put three hundred with it, an' that'll make a roll of five hundred dollars. With a careful man like me to deal, she shorely oughter be enough."

"'"Whatever does these yere fiscal bluffs of yours portend?" I asks.

"'"They portends as follows," says Peg-laig. "This yere Rock Island outfit is plumb locoed to play faro-bank. I've got a deck of kyards an' a deal box in my pocket. Son, we'll lay over a day an' break the village."

"'Thar's no use tryin' to head off old Peg-laig. He's the most invet'rate sport that a-way, an' faro-bank is his leadin' weakness. They even tells onct how this Peg-laig is in a small camp in Iowa an' is buckin' a crooked game. A pard sees him an' takes Peg-laig to task.

"'"Can't you-all see them sharps is skinnin'

you?" says this friend, an' his tones is loaded with disgust. "Ain't you wise enough to know this game ain't on the squar', an' them outlaws has a end-squeeze box an' is dealin' two kyards at a clatter an' puttin' back right onder your ignorant nose? Which you conducts yourse'f like you was born last week!"

"'"Of course, I knows the game is crooked," says Peg-laig, plenty doleful, "an' I regrets it as much as you. But whatever can I do?"

"'"Do!" says his friend; "do! You-all can quit goin' ag'inst it, can't you?"

"'"But you don't onderstand," says Peg-laig, eager an' warm. "It's all plumb easy for you to stand thar an' say I don't have to go ag'inst it. It may change your notion a whole lot when I informs you that this yere is the only game in town," an' with that this reedic'lous Peg-laig hurries back to his seat.

"'As I asserts former, it's no use me tryin' to make old Peg-laig stop when once he's started with them schemes of his, so I turns over my two hundred dollars, an' leans back to see whatever Peg-laig's goin' to a'complish next. As he says, he's got a box an' a deck to deal with. So he fakes a layout with a suite of jimcrow kyards he buys, local, an' a oil-cloth table-cover, an' thar he is organized to begin. For chips, he goes over to a store an' buys twenty stacks of big wooden button molds, same as they sews the cloth onto for overcoat buttons. When Peg-laig is ready, you should have

beheld the enthoosiasm of them Rock Island folks. They goes ag'inst that brace of Peg-laig's like a avalanche.

"'Peg-laig deals for mighty likely it's an hour. Jest as he puts it up, he's a careful dealer, an' the result is we win all the big bets an' most all the little ones, an' I'm sort o' estimatin' in my mind that we're ahead about four hundred simoleons. Of a-sudden, Peg-laig stops dealin', up-ends his box and turns to me with a look which shows he's plumb dismayed. P'intin' at the check-rack, Peg-laig says:

"'"Son, look thar!"

"'Nacherally, I looks, an' I at once realizes the roots of that consternation of Peg-laig's. It's this: While thar's more of them button molds in front of Peg-laig's right elbow than we embarks with orig'nal, thar's still twenty-two hundred dollars' worth in the hands of the Rock Island pop'lace waitin' to be cashed. However do they do it? They goes stampedin' over to this yere storekeep an' purchases 'em for four bits a gross. They buys that vagrant out that a-way. They even buys new kinds on us, an' it's a party tryin' to bet a stack of pants buttons on the high kyard that calls Peg-laig's attention to them frauds.

"'Thar's no he'p for it, however; them villagers is stony an' adamantine, an' so far as we has money they shorely makes us pay. We walks out of Rock Island. About a mile free of the camp, Peg-laig stops an' surveys me a heap mournful.

"'"Son," he says, "we was winnin', wasn't we?"

"'"Which we shore was," I replies.

"'"Exactly," says Peg-laig, shakin' his head, "we was shorely winners. An' I want to add, son, that if we-all could have kept on winnin' for two hours more, we'd a-lost eight thousand dollars."

"'It's like this yere stage hold-up on Enright,' concloodes Cherokee; 'it's a harassin' instance of where the more you wins, the more you lose.'

"About this time, Enright an' Jack Moore comes in. Colonel Sterett an' Dan Boggs j'ines us accidental, an' we-all six holds a pow wow in low tones.

"'Which Jack,' observes Enright, like he's experimentin' an' ropin' for our views, 'allows it's his beliefs that this yere guileless tenderfoot, Davis, who says he's from Buffalo, an' who's been prancin' about town for the last two days, is involved in them felonies.'

"'It ain't none onlikely,' says Boggs; 'speshully since he's from Buffalo. I never does know but one squar' gent who comes from Buffalo; he's old Jenks. An' at that, old Jenks gets downed, final, by the sheriff over on Sand Creek for stealin' a hoss.'

"'You-all wants to onderstand,' says Jack Moore, cuttin' in after Boggs, 'I don't pretend none to no proofs. I jest reckons it's so. It's a common scandal how dead innocent this yere shorthorn Davis assoomes to be; how he wants Cherokee to explain faro-bank to him; an' how he can't onderstand none why Black Jack an' the dance-hall won't mix no drinks. Which I might, in the hurry of my dooties, have passed by them childish bluffs

onchallenged an' with nothin' more than pityin' thoughts of the ignorance of this yere maverick; but gents, this party overplays his hand. Last evenin' he asks me to let him take my gun; says he's cur'ous to see one. That settles it with me; this Davis has been a object of suspicion ever since. No, it ain't that I allows he's out to queer my weepon none, but think of sech a pretence of innocence! I leaves it to you-all, collectif an' individooal, do you reckon now thar's anybody, however tender, who's that guileless as to go askin' a perfect stranger that a-way to pass him out his gun? I says no; this gent is overdoin' them roles. He ain't so tender as he assoomes. An' from the moment I hears of this last stand-up of the stage back in the canyon, I feels that this yere party is somehow in the play. Thar's four in this band who's been spreadin' woe among the stage companies lately, an' thar's only two of 'em shows in this latest racket which they gives Old Monte, an' that express gyard they shot up. Them other two sports who ain't present is shore some'ers; an' I gives it as my opinions one of 'em's right yere in our onthinkin' center, actin' silly, askin' egreegious questions, an' allowin' his name is Davis an' that he hails from Buffalo.'

"While Jack is evolvin' this long talk, we-all is thinkin'; an', son, somehow it strikes us that thar's mighty likely somethin' in this notion of Jack's. We-all agrees, however, thar bein' nothin' def'nite to go on, we can't do nothin' but wait. Still, pro

an' con like, we pushes forth in discussion of this person.

"'It does look like this Davis,' says Colonel Sterett, 'now Jack brings it up, is shorely playin' a part; which he's over easy an' ontaught, even for the East. This mornin', jest to give you-all a sample, he comes sidlin' up to me. "Is thar any good fishin' about yere?" he asks. "Which I shore yearns to fish some."

"'"Does this yere landscape," I says, wavin' my arm about the hor'zon, "remind you much of fish? Stranger," I says, "fish an' christians is partic'lar sparse in Arizona."

"'Then this person Davis la'nches out into tales deescriptif of how he goes anglin' back in the States. "Which the eel is the gamest fish," says this Davis. "When I'm visitin' in Virginny, I used to go fishin'. I don't fish with a reel, an' one of them limber poles, an' let a fish go swarmin' up an' down a stream, a-breedin' false hopes in his bosom an' lettin' him think he's loose. Not me; I wouldn't so deloode—wouldn't play it that low on a fish. I goes anglin' in a formal, se'f-respectin' way. I uses a short line an' a pole which is stiff an' strong. When I gets a bite, I yanks him out an' lets him know his fate right thar."

"'"But eels ain't no game fish," I says. "Bass is game, but not eels."

"'"Eels ain't game none, ain't they?" says this yere Davis, lettin' on he's a heap interested. "You-all listen to me; let me tell you of a eel I snags

onto down by Culpepper. When he bites that time I gives him both hands. That eel comes through the air jest whistlin' an' w'irlin'. I slams him ag'inst the great state of Virginny. Suppose one of them bass you boasts of takes sech a jolt. Whatever would he have done? He'd lay thar pantin' an' rollin' his eyes; mebby he curls his tail a little. That would be the utmost of them resentments of his. What does my eel do? Stranger, he stands up on his tail an' fights me. Game! that eel's game as scorpions! My dog Fido's with me. Fido wades into the eel, an' the commotion is awful. That eel whips Fido in two minutes, Washin'ton time. How much does he weigh? Whatever do I know about it? When he's done put the gaffs into Fido, he nacherally sa'nters back into the branch where he lives at. I don't get him none; I deems I'm plumb lucky when he don't get me. Still, if any gent talks of game fish that a-way, I wants it onderstood, I strings my money on that Culpepper eel."'

"'Thar, it's jest as I tells you-all, gents!' says Jack Moore a heap disgusted, when Colonel Sterett gets through. 'This yere Davis is a imposter. Which thar's no mortal sport could know as little as he lets on an' live to reach his age.'

"We sets thar an' lays plans. At last in pursooance of them devices, it gets roomored about camp that the next day but one, both Enright an' the New York Store aims to send over to Tucson a roll of money the size of a wagon hub.

"'Thar's no danger of them hold-ups,' says Enright to this Davis, lettin' on he's a heap confidenshul. 'They won't be lookin' for no sech riches bein' freighted over slap on the heels of this yere robbery. An' we don't aim to put up no gyards alongside of Old Monte neither. Gyards is no good; they gets beefed the first volley, an' their presence on a coach that a-way is notice that thar's plenty of treasure aboard.'

"It's in this way Enright fills that Davis as full of misinformation as a bottle of rum. Also, we deems it some signif'cant when said shorthorn saddles his hoss over to the corral an' goes skallyhootin' for Tucson about first drink time in the mornin'.

"'I've a engagement in the Oriental S'loon,' he says, biddin' us good-bye plenty cheerful, 'but I'll be back among you-all sports in a week. I likes your ways a whole lot, an' I wants to learn 'em some.'

"'Which I offers four to one,' says Jack Moore, lookin' after him as he rides away, 'you'll be back yere sooner than that, an' you-all won't know it none, at that.'

"It's the next day when the stage starts; Old Monte is crackin' his whip in a hardened way, carin' nothin' for road agents as long as they don't interfere with the licker traffic. Thar's only one passenger.

"Shore enough, jest as it's closin' in some dark in Apache Canyon, an' the stage is groanin' an' creakin'

along on a up grade, thar's a trio of hold-ups shows on the trail, an' the procession comes to a halt. Old Monte sets the brake, wrops the reins about it, locks his hands over his head, an' turns in to cuss. The hold-ups takes no notice. They yanks down the Wells-Fargo chest, pulls off the letter bag, accepts a watch an' a pocket-book from the gent inside, who's scared an' shiverin' an' scroogin' back in the darkest corner, he's that terror-bit; an' then they applies a few epithets to Old Monte an' commands him to pull his freight. An' Old Monte shorely obeys them mandates, an' goes crashin' off up the canyon on the run.

"Them outlaws hauls the plunder to one side of the trail an' lays for the mail-bag with a bowie. All three is as busy as prairy dogs after a rain, rippin' open letters an' lookin' for checks an' drafts. Later they aims at some op'rations on the express company's box.

"But they never gets to the box. Thar's the lively tones of a Winchester which starts the canyon's echoes to talkin'. That rifle ain't forty foot away, an' it speaks three times before ever you-all, son, could snap your fingers. An' that weepon don't make them observations in vain. It ain't firin' no salootes. Quick as is the work, the sights shifts to a new target every time. At the last, all three hold-ups lays kickin' an' jumpin' like chickens that a-way; two is dead an' the other is too hard hit to respond.

"Whoever does it? Jack Moore; he's that one

shiverin' passenger that time. He slides outen the stage as soon as ever it turns the angle of the canyon, an' comes scoutin' an' crawlin' back on his prey. An' I might add, it shore soothes Jack's vanity a lot, when the first remainder shows down as that artless maverick, Davis. Jack lights a pine splinter an' looks him over—pale an' dead an' done.

"'Which you-all is the victim of over-play,' says Jack to this yere Davis, same as if he hears him. 'If you never asks to see my gun that time, it's even money my suspicions concernin' you might be sleepin' yet.'"

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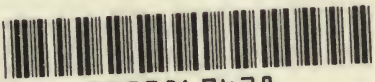

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